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Central Eurasia

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NOTICE: An * indicates material not previously disseminated in electronic form.

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Russia: Dudayev Orders Commanders To Capture Groznyy by 25 Mar

LD2303222296 Moscow Radio Rossii Network in Russian 2100 GMT 23 Mar 96

[FBIS Translated Excerpt] The situation in Groznyy remains tense. The appearance of commanders from individual detachments of Dudayev's men has been registered. The authorities link this with the armed fighters' plans to attack the Chechen capital in the immediate future. According to information from the military, Dzhokhar Dudayev has ordered his commanders to capture Groznyy before 25 March.

Taking into account the information available, the federal forces are reinforcing their check points in Groznyy and on roads entering the city. A regiment of the Patrol and Guard Post Service of the Chechen Republic numbering 100 men, together with the federal forces, has started patrolling the Chechen capital around the clock.

Fierce fighting is continuing around the town of Bamut and the village of Samashki. On Saturday the federal forces made concentrated artillery strikes with missiles and bombs on these settlements. There is a large number of dead and wounded on both sides. There are also casualties among the civilian population. [passage omitted]

Reports have emerged that the federal forces are intending to start storming the village of Komsomolskoye in the very near future. [passage omitted]

Russia: Federal Troops Placed on Alert in Groznyy

LD2303163696 Moscow ITAR-TASS World Service in Russian 1540 GMT 23 Mar 96

[By ITAR-TASS correspondent Aleksandr Kharchenko]

[FBIS Translated Text] Groznyy, 23 Mar (Itar-Tass) — Federal troop subunits in Groznyy have been put on alert to counter a possible storming of the town by Dudayev's supporters. The fighters may attack in the next few days, ITAR-TASS was told by military sources. That is why Groznyy's medical facilities have been transferred to an emergency working schedule.

Federal forces today continued operations against the fighters holding out in the villages of Bamut and Samashki. Artillery, rocket, and bomb strikes were again carried out on these locations, the military said.

A high-ranking official of the law enforcement bodies told the ITAR-TASS correspondent today that Dzhokhar Dudayev "had given an order to his armed formations to draw Chechen civilians into the fighting against the federal troops." According to this order, "commanders of illegal armed formations are instructed to set up strongholds of resistance in villages that are in the zone of military contact."

"The fighters have also been ordered to open provocative fire at the federal troops from the outskirts of those villages where the negative attitude of the people to Dudayev's rebels will not make it possible to create strongholds," the source added.

Russia: Federal Forces Issue 'Ultimatum' to Dudayev Rebels

LD2203215996 Moscow Radio Rossii Network in Russian 2100 GMT 22 Mar 96

[FBIS Translated Text] The Russian federal troops command in Chechnya has set forth an ultimatum, demanding that Dudayev rebels in the villages of Roshni-Chu, Komsolmoslkoye, and Alkhazurovo should immediately surrender. This was said to an RIA-Novosti correspondent by a senior army officer. He said that if the ultimatum was not fulfilled, the army would eliminate the rebels with all the available weapons, including heavy artillery and aviation. The officer confirmed information that the settlement of Samashki, where over 160 rebels had been sealed off, was subjected to bomb shelling. According to the officer, a large formation of Dudayev rebels has also been blockaded in Bamut.

Russia: Groznyy 'Calm' Despite Dudayev Assault Order

LD2503073596 Moscow Mayak Radio Network in Russian 0600 GMT 25 Mar 96

[FBIS Translated Excerpt] Now about Chechnya. I have already told you that the teletypes in our editorial office are quiet and there have been no reports from Chechnya. However, now we have an opportunity to learn about the situation there from our North Caucasus correspondent Pavel Guskov. He is on the line:

[Guskov] Good morning, Mayak listeners. According to pro-Dudayev leaders, Groznyy was supposed to be stormed today, but this morning has so far been calm in the town. All enterprises that have been operating in the town continue to do so. People have left for work. The town's markets are quite crowded. [passage omitted]

The fact that all Chechen deputy prime ministers have left Groznyy for the regions to sign peace agreements also speaks of the situation here. Right now, I cannot clarify the situation in Chechnya's southern regions, where the ultimatum demanding the surrender of weapons expires at 1000. Mayak, North Caucasus, this is Pavel Guskov.

Russia: Zavgayev: Chechens To Sign Peace Agreement, Surrender Arms

LD2403171096 Moscow INTERFAX in English
1444 GMT 24 Mar 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] GROZNYY, March 24 (Interfax) — Chechen leader Doku Zavgayev sees the only way to settle the Chechen crisis in the signing of an agreement on peace and accord between the authorities of the republic's villages and representatives of the Chechen government, as well as of the federal authorities.

In an interview with Interfax on Sunday he said that this process "is assuming a mass-scale character." The relevant agreements, said the Chechen leader, have been signed in approximately 100 settlements of the republic.

According to him, villagers and militants will voluntarily surrender fire arms at a public meeting on Sunday in the Katyr-Yurt village of the Achkhoy-Martan District, and will sign an agreement on peace and accord. Earlier 20 local militants voluntarily gave up their assault guns, grenades and other ammunition.

On the same day similar actions will take place in some villages of the Urus-Martan, Nozhay-Yurt and Groznyy districts, according to Zavgayev. The Chechen authorities, he said, will be represented by deputies prime minister, while the Russian side — by the federal command.

Representatives of the Roshniy-Chu and Gekhiy-Chu villages will sign protocols on peace and accord on March 25 and 26, said Doku Zavgayev. This understanding was reached at the meeting between special envoy of the Russian government Nikolay Fedosov, Chechen Deputy Prime Minister Sanaki Arbiyev, commander of the North-Caucasian Military District Anatoliy Kvashnin on the one hand, and the authorities and elders of those villages on Saturday.

In line with the understandings, said Zavgayev, "the local authorities assume commitments to prevent militants and members of other criminal groups to their villages."

"The agreements are being signed on the initiative of the local population, who display full loyalty to the official authorities and the adherence to the Constitution of the Russian Federation."

Russia: Chechnya: Peace Accords Signed in Achkhoy-Martan District

LD2303155296 Moscow INTERFAX in English
1359 GMT 23 Mar 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] GROZNYY, Mar 23 (Interfax) — Achkhoy-Martan District officials began to sign agreements on peace and accord with the command of federal forces and Chechnya's Moscow-backed government on Saturday, a source in the local government told Interfax.

The first agreement will be signed in the town of Katyr-Yurt, where Chechen government officials and representatives of federal troops went Saturday morning.

According to the source, local residents held rallies in all population centers of the district, except Orekhovo, Bamut, Staryy Achkhoy and Samashki, and decided to oust Dudayev's militants from their towns and proclaim the district a zone of peace.

Russia: Chechnya: 17 Areas in Shali District Sign Peace Accord

LD2203143496 Moscow ITAR-TASS in English
1352 GMT 22 Mar 96

[By Kometa Temayeva]

[FBIS Transcribed Text] GROZNYY, March 22 (Itar-Tass) — As of now 17 populated areas in Shali district have signed a three-sided agreement on peace and accord.

Shali is Chechnya's second industrially potential district which accounts for 10 per cent of the republic's population.

In keeping with the agreement, they have handed in weapons, including 207 submachine-guns, 52 anti-tank mines, 15 grenade launchers and 12 machine-guns. The weapons were available mainly with the members of self-defence detachments which had been formed under the bilateral agreement between the command of federal troops and the Dudayev side in July 1995.

Following the signing of the agreement and the handing in of arms, the former members of self-defence detachments have given legal guarantees of security and some of them, after an appropriate check-up, have joined local police, according to Shali District administration chief Sherip Alikhodzhiyev.

Russia: Katyr-Yurt Settlement Signs Chechen Peace Agreement

LD2503114696 Moscow INTERFAX in English
1017 GMT 25 Mar 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] GROZNYY, March 25 (Interfax) — The administration of the Katyr-Yurt settlement in western Chechnya has signed a peace agreement with the Moscow-backed Chechen government and the federal troops command, a command representative told Interfax Monday.

"The administrations of three settlements in the Nozhay-Yurt region — Zandak, Gilyaniy and Baytarkiy — are also expected to sign the peace agreements," he said.

Commenting on the situation near Samashki, he said combat has not started in the area, but federal aviation and artillery are bombing the forest where militants under Chechen separatist leader Dzhokhar Dudayev are hiding.

"Some gunmen have left Samashki by pretending they are civilians," he said.

The interior troops confiscated 28 sub-machine guns, a 23-millimeter gun, two rifles and 17 grenades Sunday, said the command representative.

Russia: Chechnya: Villages Refuse To Hand Over Weapons

LD2503115896 Moscow Russian Television Network in Russian 1100 GMT 25 Mar 96

[From the "Vesti" newscast]

[FBIS Translated Text] Our correspondent said over the telephone just now that Goyskoye, Komsomolskoye, and Alkhazurovo villages are refusing to sign the peace accord with federal forces. Demands to hand over weapons and to allow the Chechen police to inspect the villages were rejected. The ultimatum deadline is expiring and the federal forces could start battles in the area of Goyskoye village, our correspondent reports. There are many civilians in the other two villages and therefore a peace corridor will hold there until 1000 tomorrow morning. The talks are continuing and you may expect information from our film crew in the next newscasts.

Russia: Grachev Arrives in Groznyy, Meets Federal Command

LD2503112096 Moscow ITAR-TASS World Service in Russian 1054 GMT 25 Mar 96

[By ITAR-TASS correspondent Aleksandr Kharchenko]

[FBIS Translated Text] Groznyy, 25 Mar (Itar-Tass) — Russian Federation Defense Minister Pavel Grachev arrived in the Chechen capital today. An ITAR-TASS correspondent learned this from military sources. No information was given as to the program of the defense minister's visit. However, it has become known that immediately after his arrival, Pavel Grachev left for Khankala to hold a conference with the command of the Joint Group of Federal Forces in the Chechen Republic.

Russia: Grachev on Chechnya Operations, Soldiers' Hygiene

LD2203190196 Moscow NTV in Russian 1600 GMT 22 Mar 96

[Correspondent Yevgeniy Revenko video report; from the "Segodnya" newscast]

[FBIS Translated Text] [Revenko] After opening a military housing estate built in Tula Region by Bulgarian builders, Defense Minister Pavel Grachev told journalists today that the federal forces in Chechnya are conducting special operations on four fronts — the western, southwestern, southern, and eastern fronts. According to Pavel Grachev, the main combat actions will take place in the southwest of Chechnya, in the area of Achkhoy-Martan, Orekhovo and Komsomolsk:

[Begin Grachev recording] According to all the information, the southwest evidently turned out to be the stronghold of the Dudayev leadership. This is already becoming absolutely clear, their bases and command posts are quite clear, and so I do not rule out that in the next few days, fierce fighting will take place there, both on the approaches to and behind the settlements, when the federal troops move into the mountains. [end recording]

[Revenko] Declaring that everything is essentially over in Bamut, Pavel Grachev talked about the difficulties in Samashki, where, according to the minister's information, about 300 fighters have gathered:

[Begin Grachev recording] They did not expect the sudden maneuvers to surround this settlement, and when they saw they were caught in a pincer movement, they put up fierce resistance and started to break out. Unfortuanately, they still have not laid down their weapons. [end recording]

[Revenko] In addition, the defense minister denied reports that his subordinates in Chechnya cannot wash and are going hungry. Pavel Grachev stressed that he had specially toured around four guardposts during his visit to the republic, and saw for himself that the soldiers are clean:

[Begin Grachev recording] I had men strip. None of them were suffering from dystrophia, none of them were dirty, nothing of the kind. They wash regularly, once a week, or at least once every 10 days; and they get a change of underwear in turn. [end recording] [video shows Grachev cutting ribbon at housing estate, talking to reporters]

Russia: Chechnya: Russian Forces Extend Withdrawal Deadline

AU2503115496 Paris AFP in English
1141 GMT 25 Mar 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Alkhazurovo, Russia, March 25 (AFP) — Russian forces on Monday agreed to postpone by 24 hours to Tuesday a deadline for rebel fighters to leave three Chechen villages or face heavy bombardment.

Residents of Goyskoye, Alkhazurovo and Komsomolskoye, in southern Chechnya, negotiated the reprieve with representatives of federal troops to give them the time to convince separatist soldiers to leave the village, several local officials of Alkhazurovo told AFP.

On Sunday, Moscow Echo radio announced that Russian forces and Chechen separatists had agreed on a temporary ceasefire until Monday morning to allow besieged rebel soldiers to leave three villages and civilians to hand over their arms.

About 500 Chechen soldiers are believed to be in the three villages.

"We are now going to negotiate with the soldiers, and we hope to succeed in persuading them. We have no choice, we must try and save the village," Adam Khantshukayev, an Alkhazurovo elder, told AFP.

Russia: Yeltsin Aide Baturin on Formation of Chechnya Peace Plan

LD2503125296 Moscow NTV in Russian
1800 GMT 24 Mar 96

[Studio interview with Yuriy Baturin, President Yeltsin's national security advisor, by moderator Yevgeniy Kiselev; from the "Itogi" program—live]

[FBIS Translated Excerpt] [Kiselev] Full-scale military action in Chechnya is continuing. The federal forces seem to have chosen a plan to escalate military action so as to finish off these formations, or at least to inflict maximum damage and then start peace negotiations before the warm weather comes, before the mountain paths open up, before the greenery emerges — that is, before the trees are covered with foliage, creating ideal conditions for armed Dudayev supporters to spread the war by partisan methods. In any case, one gets the impression that of all the options for a peace settlement the president has been talking about just recently, this is the one that has been chosen for the moment. Or is that not the case? I put this question to Yuriy Baturin, the president's national security advisor, who is with us here live in the studio. Yuriy Mikhailovich, what is the plan for a peaceful settlement, then?

[Baturin] Unfortunately, I cannot tell you about the plan for a peaceful settlement here now — the president will do this in person.

[Kiselev] When?

[Baturin] It should be said that in the time period between the last sitting of the Security Council, on 15 March, and now, the plan has not been finally coordinated. There are certain difficulties in agreeing on this. The president is now off to Norway for a visit, and I think he will announce it after that. [passage omitted]

[Baturin] Now, although the plan has not yet been made public, nevertheless certain points of the plan are being implemented, work is already being done in accordance with these points.

[Kiselev] You mean the escalation of combat actions?

[Baturin] No. Properly speaking, the plan discussed in the Security Council does not contain a single point relating to combat actions, with the exception of antiterrorist counter...

[Kiselev, interrupting] Excuse me, but how then do you explain the fact that combat actions are now becoming overtly widescale, losses are high, and all this is hardly likely to be productive? We are ourselves, it seems, producing a partisan war situation.

[Baturin] It is hard to describe as productive a situation where we are suffering losses, where people are dying, but you gave the reason yourself just now. I should point out that the Dudayev fighters are also striving to intensify the conflict. They are now trying to keep, and furthermore, to broaden control over the territory, and to drag the population of the republic — and more widely, of the north Caucasus region — into the conflict. The detonator for all this was to be fresh acts of terrorism. During the night of 21 March, a series of preventive measures taken in Groznyy averted an attempt to stage an action similar to that of 6-7 March. These are all real facts, you cannot get away from that. [passage omitted]

[Kiselev] Now for the last question. Many people are now saying that the military command, both of the army and of the internal troops, are acting as they think fit, at their peril; while work is under way on the president's peace plan, the military are pursuing their own tough policy of force. What is your view of this: is this the case?

[Baturin] The fact is that the military you are talking about, at least those at the ministerial level, are themselves taking part in drawing up, debating, and coordinating this plan. Second, one of the main principles of any such conflict is that of a unified command. There exists a joint group of federal troops in Chechnya, and if any decisions are taken, nobody may impede these.

[Kiselev] So to sum up, you can say that everything that is currently taking place there, including combat actions, is in no way at variance with the peace efforts the president is preparing?

[Baturin] I would say, rather, that it will not wreck the president's peace efforts.

Russia: Samashki Turned Into Mass Grave by Bombings

LD2203135696 Moscow Radiostantsiya Ekho Moskvy in Russian 1300 GMT 22 Mar 96

[FBIS Translated Text] Information coming from the village of Samashki is fragmentary and very often does not correspond to reality. Our correspondent Dmitriy Khitarov was convinced by eye-witnesses of the events:

[Khitarov] Sernovodsk and Samashki have been turned into mass graves, according to activists of the Union of Women of the North Caucasus speaking to journalists today. Samashki resident Roza Ansarova also confirmed this. She survived two attacks on the village. She said the corridor was open for only two hours. Only about 6,000 people managed to leave the village, and about 10,000 people were left behind. Many women remained in Samashki of their own free will, and not only because of their husbands, as the federal authorities reported. Boys under 16 were also denied exit from the village, and, of course, mothers stayed with their children.

The village is being bombed by bombs weighing half a tonne each. Such bombs leave craters 19 meters wide and nine meters deep. Not even one extremely reinforced basement can withstand such a strike.

Some more information on the validity of the information: The federal troops command said that a large group of militants is hiding in the forests around Samashki. According to human rights activist Andrey Mironov who has just come back from Samashki, the forests around the village were destroyed by order of Tsar Nicholas I, and this is described in Tolstoy's story.

Russia: Federal Troops Continue Attacking Separatist Positions

LD2503143996 Moscow INTERFAX in English 1312 GMT 25 Mar 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] GROZNYY, March 25 (Interfax) — Russian Federal troops continue to storm and deliver bomb attacks on separatists' positions near the Chechen village of Samashki, federal troops commander Lieutenant-General Vyacheslav Tikhomirov told Russian Defense Minister Pavel Grachev Monday.

"About 100 separatists have been eliminated here," he said. He also announced that some 150-180 irreconcilable rebels were still offering resistance in the region of Samashki, and that "the rebels based in Samashki will be eliminated within the next few days."

He stated that the federal troops had blocked a large separatist formation near Bamut. "No clean-up operations are being carried out here. The rebels' positions are being shelled and bombed," he said.

"No combat operations are taking place near the villages of Stary Achkhoi and Orekhovo, as Russian servicemen and builders are kept as hostages in these villages. The federal troops are delivering selective strikes on revealed targets," Tikhomirov said.

Speaking about the situation in the area of the Alkhazurovo, Goiskoye and Komsomolskoye communities, he said that a group of separatists had been blocked there and that the federal command was trying to start peace talks with the administration of these villages. "No combat operations are being carried out here," he said.

To quote Tikhomirov, the situation is particularly serious in Chechnya's Vedeno region where the separatists had built a strong defense system. According to intelligence, the militants have two combat vehicles and a tank, he said.

Russia: Unidentified Persons Fire at Dagestan Checkpoints

LD2503160896 Moscow INTERFAX in English 1312 GMT 25 Mar 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] MAKHACHKALA, Mar 25 (Interfax) — An OMON [Special Purpose Militia] police unit on duty at a checkpoint near Kizlyar, Dagestan, came under grenade fire from unidentified persons Sunday night.

The attack was repulsed and an OMON officer was wounded in his hip, sources at the Dagestan Interior Ministry told Interfax Monday.

The Gizel checkpoint on the Dagestan-Chechen border was attacked on Saturday night, sources said. A group of gunmen with a strength of up to ten people put the checkpoint under grenade and automatic gunfire for 30 minutes. No casualties are reported. The servicemen fired in response and forced the gunmen back to Chechnya.

CIS: Baltic Leaders Issue Joint Statement on Duma Resolution

LD2103193596 Tallinn Radio Tallinn Network in Estonian 1700 GMT 21 Mar 96

[FBIS Translated Excerpt] President Lennart Meri, Latvian President Guntis Ulmanis, and Lithuanian President Algirdas Brazauskas have issued a joint statement in connection with the resolution adopted by the Russian State Duma, on the restoration of the USSR.

In their joint statement the presidents of the Baltic states emphasize the need to observe the principles of international law and act in solidarity with U.S. Secretary of State Warren Christopher and other heads of state who like Boris Yeltsin have adopted a negative attitude to the Duma's resolution. This has been reported to BNS by the presidential press service.

The statement has been forwarded to the Russian, U.S., and European heads of state. [passage omitted]

CIS: Russian Federation Council Head Meets With CIS Official

LD2203192996 Moscow ITAR-TASS in English 1819 GMT 22 Mar 96

[By Larisa Klyuchnikova]

[FBIS Transcribed Text] MINSK, March 22 (Itar-Tass) — Chairman of the Federation Council Yegor Stroyev met CIS Executive Secretary Ivan Korotchenya in the Belarusian capital Minsk on Friday.

Stroyev highly appraised four-year work of the Minsk-based CIS executive secretariat.

The secretariat has done much to foster an understanding of the need for CIS members to integrate, Stroyev said.

The integration should begin in the economy, with supra-national bodies to add later to handle finance, price parity and the setting up of financial-industrial groups, he continued.

The Minsk meetings of the Federation Council's delegation have left it sure that the CIS members want the integration and are willing to find a path to it, Stroyev said.

He sounded soothing, quoting the concern voiced by Belarusia's foreign minister about sovereignty.

"Sovereignty is a basis for any unification, and to encroach on it means to revert again to the unitary state which used to be," Stroyev said.

Korotchenya said he did not think any group of states could make a union outside the CIS frame.

The CIS is generating an integration core, he said.

Korotchenya said Russia, Belarus, Kazakhstan and Kyrgyzstan plan to issue a collective statement and sign integration documents in a week.

CIS: ITAR-TASS Carries Press Review for 23 Mar

LD2303073996 Moscow ITAR-TASS in English 0626 GMT 23 Mar 96

["Press Review" — ITAR-TASS headline]

[FBIS Transcribed Text] MOSCOW, March 23 (Itar-Tass) — "Izvestiya" carries an article by its correspondent based in Chechnya Igor Rotar, saying that "Groznyy has been waiting in painful suspense for a new storm which might begin on March 24. A year after Groznyy was seized by Russian troops peace has never been restored there. With every passing day hatred and fear have been increasingly growing among the population."

"Krasnaya Zvezda" writes that "despite heavy losses, Chechen militants continue to offer strong resistance. An attempt to begin talks with them ended in failure. In a number of settlements of the Schelkovskiy and Naurskiy regions of Chechnya Dudayev's militants have been actively recruiting young people aged 17 and older. Groups if new "conscripts" are being sent to Southern areas of Chechnya.

According to reports available, the reinforcement of defence engineering facilities continues in Staryy Achkhoy. To all appearances, peace in Chechnya promised in March will not be achieved." [quotation marks as received]

In another article, entitled "The history of a state is interrupted if there are no heroes left in it" its author, deputy commander of the Urals military district reponsible for the upbringing of young servicemen, Aleksandr Gorodnichev, ponders over the problem "why problems of the upbringing of the yonng people have been attached an increasing importance in different regions of the country."

The General believes that "today, priorities have appeared in the approach to the upbringing of the young people which shows that the society weary of the nihilism of post-Perestroyka years has been making a new assessment of things which have been called into question."

"Izvestiya" draws attention to a letter which came to the newspaper from the city of Tomsk headlined "We do not want to return to ever-better future". The letter was signed by scientists, doctors, construction workers, entrepreneurs and addressed to Russia's democratic leaders Gaydar, Yavlinskiy, Popov, Khakamada, Starovoytova and others.

"We appeal to you, ask you and finally, demand that you stop snatching at electors' votes. If you put together all the percent shortages in the December elections, your would have won a reliable majority in the Duma. Let us forget your party ambitions just for the time being. Let us stop enjoying the merits of your party programmes. Today, there is one major programme that matters a great deal to all — to keep our ship afloat. In our opinion, this can be done by the former team with the same captain. In other words, we suggest coming out in a single democratic alliance to vote for Boris Yeltsin."

"Rossiyskaya Gazeta" carries a statement by Central Bank Chairman Sergey Dubinin about the forthcoming circulation in Russia of new US 100-dollar banknotes. Dubinin has called on "Russian citizens not to make haste in exchanging their deposits in US dollars into the new banknotes during the first days after the new banknotes are put into circulation, adding that haste will give the owners of the US currency nothing, but unnecessary excitement, financial and moral losses."

"Rossiyskie Vesti" carries an interview with first deputy Economics Minister Yakov Urinson entitled "The majority of all problems have only one solution — to observe the budget." Urinson comments on the way of the development of the economic reform in the next few months and suggests his own economic forecast for this year.

Russia: Results of Yeltsin, Christopher Meeting on Nuclear Summit

LD2203145696 Moscow INTERFAX in English 1332 GMT 22 Mar 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] MOSCOW, Mar 22 (Interfax) — Russian President Boris Yeltsin received U.S. Secretary of State Warren Christopher in the Moscow Kremlin on Friday. Christopher has come to Russia on an official visit.

Christopher and Russian Foreign Minister Yevgeniy Primakov informed the Russian leader of the results of their negotiations, reports the presidential press service.

The president voiced his opinion on various aspects of bilateral relations, including Russian-U.S. interaction in the Bosnian settlement and peacekeeping in the Middle East.

They also discussed the nuclear summit to be held in Moscow in April.

The meeting was constructive and business-like, reports the press service.

The two sides focused their attention on the preparations for an international conference on nuclear security, scheduled for late April in Moscow. The leaders of the so-called G-8 countries are expected to take part, well-informed sources have told Interfax.

Preparations for a Russian-U.S. summit that will take place during the conference on nuclear security were also under discussion.

During the discussion of bilateral relations, Christopher expressed the concern of the U.S. Administration over the State Duma resolution of March 15 that virtually denounces the Belovezh Accords, which disbanded the USSR and formed a basis for the CIS, said the sources.

Russia: Duma Committee Expresses 'Regret' Over Christopher Remarks

LD2203195596 Moscow ITAR-TASS in English 1928 GMT 22 Mar 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] MOSCOW, March 22 (Itar-Tass) — Preparations for the coming Group of Eight nuclear security summit and Russian-American cooperation were in the focus of Friday's meeting between Russian President Boris Yeltsin and U.S. Secretary of State Warren Christopher.

Christopher is on a two-day Moscow visit and is due to take part in the meeting of the international Contact Group for Bosnia.

The Yeltsin-Christopher meeting was held behind closed doors. The presidential press secretary Sergey Medvedev told journalists that, apart from preparations for the Moscow G-8 summit on nuclear security, much attention was given to the preparation for U.S. President Bill Clinton's visit to Moscow timed to coincide with the G-8 summit.

According to the presidential press service Yeltsin expressed his standpoint "on the most acute issues of the current Russian-US relations including the interaction of Russia and the USA in the Bosaian conflict settlement and peace efforts in the Middle East."

Later in the day, speaking to reporters after meeting his Russian counterpart Yevgeniy Primakov, Christopher said he delivered a message from President Clinton to President Yeltsin expressing the U.S. leader's hope for a success of the summit and their meeting in April.

Christopher said that a worldwide nuclear test ban treaty could be signed already this autumn.

"Russia and the U.S. endorsed a truly comprehensive test ban," indicating that positions of both nations on the problem have practically coincided.

According to Christopher, Clinton will continue to support political and economic reforms in Russia and back those political forces which are carrying out those reforms.

However, asked if during the April summit in Moscow President Clinton should back Boris Yeltsin's candidature for the Russian presidency in the June election, Christopher told reporters that although Clinton has supported and will support Yeltsin, he will not interfere in Russia's election campaign.

Meanwhile, the Russian State Duma Committee for international affairs in a statement on Friday expressed regret over Christopher's critical remarks on Duma's denunciation of 1991 documents which formalised the break-up of the Soviet Union and its replacement by a weaker Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS).

Christopher had branded the Duma resolution as "irresponsible".

Committee members expressed hope that Christopher had received wholly misleading information concerning the Duma's resolution and stressed that their statement reflected only the opinion of the Committee and not the whole of the Duma.

Russia: Zhirinovskiy Comments on Christopher at Duma Meeting

LD2203205596 Moscow NTV in Russian
1900 GMT 22 Mar 96

[From the "Segodnya" newscast]

[FBIS Translated Text] [Announcer Tatyana Mitkova] This was not the only response to the events [U.S. Secretary of State Warren Christopher's meeting with politicians] in Spasso House [U.S. ambassador's residence]. An offended Vladimir Zhirinovskiy, who was not invited along, decided to respond in his inimitable way to the U.S. embargo on his person. What you will hear now is what he said in the State Duma about the U.S. secretary of state.

[Begin Zhirinovskiy recording] We have not received an invitation. He [Christopher] will be talking to Gaydar and Yavlinskiy; that is who he will be talking to. A weakling talking to weaklings; that is what it will be, because he will go away with a heart attack. I had a talk with Nixon; he died when he got back and this one will go home and die as well. They are sorry for him; he is a sick, poor old man.

So he will not venture to have talks with me; he is a coward, just like Clinton. They are all a load of saxophone players, drugged up to the eyeballs. [laughter, voice heard calling for order] [end recording]

Russia: Communist Leader Favors Good Relations With U.S.

LD2203205096 Moscow INTERFAX in English
1908 GMT 22 Mar 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] MOSCOW, March 22 (Interfax) — Chairman of the Communist Party of Russia Gennadiy Zyuganov has said he is interested in developing relations with the United States.

"We are interested in rather good, predictable and friendly relations with the United States," he told reporters Friday after a meeting with U.S. secretary of State Warren Christopher at the residence of the U.S. ambassador in Moscow.

Besides Zyuganov, the meeting involved President of Russia's Yakutia-Sakha internal republic Mikhail Nikolayev, Chairman of the State Duma Committee on International Affairs Vladimir Lukin (the Yabloko faction), Chairman of the Russian Union of Industrialists and Entrepreneurs Arkadiy Volskiy, Republican Party leader Vladimir Lysenko and Agrarian Party leader Mikhail Lapshin.

Russian representatives at the round-table meeting expressed their concern over relations with the United States that "have arisen of late," and over "some coolness that has appeared," Zyuganov said. "This is primarily related to plans for NATO expansion eastward and the fact that Russia's national-cultural particularities both on ex-USSR territory and in the neighboring countries are not taken into consideration," he said.

The U.S. side "has listened to all this very attentively and at least with much interest," Zyuganov said.

Zyuganov said he favored the development of relations between Russia and the United States. "I am 'for' a dialogue and 'for' our two large countries developing relations on the basis of good neighbors, taking into account the particularities which are taking place here (in Russia)," he said.

"Business circles in the United States, West Europe, China, India and Japan will welcome our (Communist Party) policy," Zyuganov said. "During the last two years I met with everyone, held consultations. They are interested in trading and being friends with Russia and in using our capabilities," he said. "We have wonderful sciences. We should support them, and everything will be alright," Zyuganov said.

When asked what would happen to Russian-U.S. relations after the June 1996 presidential elections in Russia, Zyuganov said: "Our relations cannot live by one day. There must be a strategic policy, a single one for the entire nation. It cannot change depending on who will come tomorrow. In this, i.e. in the predictability, is the essence of relations between large powers." "Otherwise, one is incapable of pursuing a balanced and clever foreign policy," he added.

Regarding the performance of new Russian Foreign Minister Yevgeniy Primakov, Zyuganov said that "Primakov is at least implementing a clear foreign policy. He has set the priorities. I see him energetically negotiating with our neighbors. I would not assume to assess it (the foreign policy) as a whole, but what (former Foreign Minister Andrey) Kozyrev did and what Primakov is doing could hardly be compared," Zyuganov said. "This one (Primakov) has a policy. It can be agreed with or not. But he has a policy," Zyuganov said.

Russia: 'Contradiction' Forms Backdrop to Christopher Visit

MM2203165496 Moscow IZVESTIYA in Russian
23 Mar 96 p 3

[Report by Konstantin Eggert: "Brussels Will Not Object If Russia Persuades East Europe Not To Join NATO"]

[FBIS Translated Text] U.S. Secretary of State Warren Christopher commenced his visit to Moscow, which has an uncommonly packed schedule, with a "one-on-one" supper with Yevgeniy Primakov.

Talks with the head of the Russian Ministry of Foreign Affairs constitute just part of the program, which includes a meeting with President Yeltsin and participation in a session of the Contact Group on a Bosnian settlement. There was a kind of prologue to the visit: an hour-long meeting at the U.S. Embassy between Christopher and NATO Secretary General Javier Solana. The leader of the North Atlantic Alliance told the secretary of state about his talks in Moscow.

Talking with Russian journalists, State Department press liaison officer Nicholas Burns did not tire of repeating: "We have good relations with Russia." To judge from his words, fundamental differences remain over the two main problems: NATO expansion and (to a lesser degree) Russian-Iranian cooperation in the nuclear power sphere. But the cool atmosphere which surrounds Moscow and Washington today as a consequence of the Kremlin's changing its foreign policy and ideological guidelines should not be discounted.

The Americans' and the Europeans' guarded reaction to new Foreign Minister Primakov does not encourage contacts either. Nicholas Burns found a single epithet for him: "earnest." People in the NATO secretary general's entourage were more definite: Primakov "is creating a hostile image for NATO."

In recent days both Solana and Christopher have managed to reiterate repeatedly that the decision to admit new members to NATO will be made regardless of the Kremlin. The secretary of state delivered a speech in Prague to the foreign ministers of 12 Central European states, assuring them that there would be no backstage deals with Moscow. While in the Russian capital, the alliance's secretary general remarked with manifest irony: "We do not make anyone join by force. Let Mr. Primakov try to persuade the Czechs, Hungarians, and Poles not to do it. If he succeeds, we will not object."

Despite Moscow's obvious reluctance to take an active part in the Partnership for Peace program, the State Department spokesman called Russia a "good partner" and gave an assurance that all the participants in the program, our country included, can in principle aspire to full NATO membership. But the high-ranking organization representatives who visited Moscow with Solana do not conceal in private conversation that Russia's joining the alliance is more than problematic. "NATO is, above all, a collective security organization. It is hard to imagine how it could come to the aid of such a giant state as yours" — this is the very widespread explanation "not for publication."

Another contradiction is also apparent. Essentially speaking on Christopher's behalf, Press Secretary Burns admitted that the problem of moving nuclear weapons up toward Russia's borders in the event of NATO's expansion has not yet been resolved and must be tackled. At the same time Solana tried during his visit to convince Russian politicians and the public that there is no such problem and that NATO has no intention (at least in the foreseeable future) of changing its nuclear strategy by stationing missiles with nuclear warheads in Central Europe.

Although the decision to enlarge the North Atlantic Alliance will not be adopted this year (Solana declared this officially), the Kremlin and Smolensk Square [Foreeign Ministry] do not intend to take either Brussels or Washington at their word when they maintain that no one has any intention of isolating Russia from the all-European processes.

Neither side tires of repeating: "It is possible to find a way out of this impasse." But the directly opposite impression is being formed. The degree of mutual mistrust is so great and the stakes in the presidential elections in the United States and in Russia are so high that a compromise might seem a more risky matter than continued confrontation.

Russia: State Duma Attacks U.S. Sanctions Against Cuba

LD2203203296 Moscow ITAR-TASS in English 2014 GMT 22 Mar 96

[By Pavel Kuznetsov]

[FBIS Transcribed Text] MOSCOW, March 22 (Itar-Tass) — The State Duma passed a statement today, scolding the U.S. tightening of economic sanctions against Cuba in the wake of its lethal attack on two civilian planes manned by Cuban exiles.

The statement described the Helms-Burton sanctions statute as contradicting international law.

The U.S. step creates a dangerous precedent of a national legislation expanding on trade and economic relations of other states, the statement says. This practice cannot be defined differently except as an attempt to pressure sovereign states into a line of behaviour which would suit interests of the U.S. alone, the parliamentary statement continues.

The Duma bristled against the provisions of the U.S. statute which it sees as damaging Russia's economic interests in Cuba.

The Duma has called on the Russian government for measures which would protect Russian traders with Cuba from interference of third parties.

The Duma warned that it is ready to consider legislative measures of "similar character".

The lower parliamentary house has commissioned its speaker Gennadiy Seleznev to relay the statement to the U.N. secretary-general, U.S. president, Congress, Cuban leader Fidel Castro and Cuban parliament.

Russia: Primakov Confirms Russia's Stand Against NATO Expansion

LD2203170596 Moscow INTERFAX in English 1533 GMT 22 Mar 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] MOSCOW, March 22 (Interfax) — Russian Foreign Minister Yevgeniy Primakov has confirmed Moscow's negative position regarding the plans for NATO expansion eastward.

"Russia will not accept NATO enlargement not because it has the right to veto on this issue but because it defends its state interests," Primakov told a news conference in Moscow Friday on the results of his two-day talks with U.S. secretary of State Warren Christopher.

However, "there are no issues which are not subject to discussion, and there are no situations out of which a mutually acceptable way could not be found," Primakov said.

The compromise "may lie in a very wide field except NATO coming closer to Russian borders," Primakov said.

Primakov said that during his talks with Christopher they had considered "global problems of interest to our countries and primarily arms control." In particular, Primakov and Christopher summed up some results of the activity for distinguishing between tactic and strategic air-defense systems now under way in Geneva. Moscow deems this necessary for ratification of the START-II strategic arms reduction treaty, Primakov said.

Primakov said he and Christopher had discussed problems related to the "destruction of biological and chemical weapons," conventional arms in Europe and non-proliferation of nuclear weapons.

Primakov and Christopher also considered crises, primarily that in former Yugoslavia.

They discussed in detail preparations for the coming Moscow summit on nuclear safety in April, which will involve Russia and the Group of Seven leading industrialized nations.

Christopher said, for his part, that his talks with Primakov were "very constructive." The U.S. and Russian presidents, Bill Clinton and Boris Yeltsin, consider Russian-U.S. relations as a priority for their countries and from the point of view of international security, he said.

Christopher highlighted the common position of Washington and Moscow favoring a full ban on nuclear tests.

Russia: Chernomyrdin Comments at Contact Group Meeting

LD2303152696 Moscow INTERFAX in English 1359 GMT 23 Mar 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] MOSCOW, March 23 (Interfax) — Russia will continue to take part in the international community's efforts for settling the conflict in former Yugoslavia, Russian Prime Minister Viktor Chernomyrdin said when opening the session of the international contact group on Bosnia on the level of foreign ministers in Moscow Saturday.

Regarding the implementation of the peace agreements on Bosnia, Chernomyrdin said the key achievement of the first stage of these agreements' implementation was that war had been ended and senseless bloodshed had been stopped.

However, peace in Bosnia "has not thus far become irreversible," he said.

"True reconciliation is still far away. The future of peace in Bosnia is contingent on the settlement of key political problems regarding the post-war accommodation and social-economic restoration," Chernomyrdin said.

The tragic exodus of Serb residents from Sarajevo, the problem concerning relations within the Muslim-Croat federation, the display of mutual fear and hatred give reason to be very seriously concerned about possible renewal of armed clashes, he said.

The mechanism for carrying out the civil stage of the peace agreements' implementation has already been devised, Chernomyrdin said, adding that the Moscow session is actually enacting this mechanism.

Chernomyrdin said it was very important that the contact group and other international organizations and structures "display not in words but in practice a demanding but fair and impartial approach when evaluating the actions of all (conflicting) parties in Bosnia and providing them with so necessary assistance."

Russia is acting precisely in this fashion, Chernomyrdin said.

The timely holding of elections in Bosnia is the key issue, Chernomyrdin said.

He praised the performance of Carl Bildt, the international coordinator of the civil operation in Bosnia and Herzegovina, and the activity of international humanitarian organizations.

It is very important to deploy international civil police forces as soon as possible, Chernomyrdin said.

Moves towards peace in Bosnia should stimulate the establishment of peaceful friendly relations in the entire Balkans, Chernomyrdin said.

The Bosnian crisis proves that challenges regarding European security are resultant from the difficulties in the social transformation of the new states multiplied by the unsettled ethnic conflicts rather than from military problems, he said.

These dangers cannot be removed only by military force or the enlargement of military-political alliances, Chernomyrdin said.

"All of us must take into consideration the lessons of the Balkan history in the 20th century: the creation of confronting coalitions can spawn tension and war," he said.

"The most efficient and reliable way is to develop truly pan-European cooperation in order to strengthen democratic institutions, help economic reforms and protect the rights of ethnic minorities," Chernomyrdin said.

Russian President Boris Yeltsin sends his "most frank and kind wishes" to those at the contact group's session and apologizes for his failing to meet with the participants in the session because of his busy schedule, Chernomyrdin said.

Besides the foreign ministers of the contact group's member states, the Moscow session involves the foreign minister of Italy as the country which now chairs the European Union, the foreign ministers of the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia, Croatia and Bosnia and Herzegovina, representatives of the U.N., the Implementation Force in Bosnia, the OSCE and other international regional organizations.

Russia: Foreign Policy Implications of Duma Vote on USSR Eyed

MK2203151196 Moscow MOSKOVSKIY KOMSOMOLETS in Russian 22 Mar 96 pp 1-2

[Report by Aleksandr Budberg: "Ukraine Refuses To Have Nuclear Arms Withdrawn. 'A Tempest in a Teapot' Gaining Momentum"]

[FBIS Translated Text] Speaking before journalists, State Duma Speaker Gennadiy Seleznev said that the reaction to the State Duma resolution denouncing the Belovezhskaya Forest accords is reminiscent of a tempest in a teapot because the resolution does not have the force of law.

But the tea seems to be spilling out of the pot. On Wednesday evening, the Kiev authorities said that nuclear weapons cannot be fully withdrawn from Ukraine to Russia according to the agreed timetable, that is, by July. This is explicit proof of the fact that either Gennadiy Seleznev fails to understand something or is putting a bold face on it.

The CIS countries, the Baltic states, and Eastern Europe saw the State Duma's statement as yet another reason to give thought to their security and to take certain steps to avoid possible Russian aggression. Furthermore, the leaders of these states don't care a fig about what Mr. Seleznev deems to be a law — and what, a resolution. The reason is that many of them might now seize the opportunity and take specific advantage of the Russian parliament's stupidity.

Kiev is in the most difficult economic situation. For this reason Leonid Kuchma opted not to wait until the next day to state that precisely Ukraine is the main counterweight to possible plans for the restoration of a communist empire. He immediately turned to the West, which would, undoubtedly, be glad to insure itself against both Zyuganov and Zhirinovskiy by a double sanitary cordon.

A response followed instantaneously. U.S. Secretary of State Warren Christopher immediately arrived in Kiev with much fanfare. Ukraine was promised economic aid and assistance in its course toward "national independence." The state was transferred to the category of "countries crucial for the United States." Moreover, while formerly the Americans had demanded more resolutely than any one else that Kiev comply with the schedule for the withdrawal of nuclear arms from Ukraine, this time they recognized that this cannot be done physically by July.

There is nothing to comment on in this particular case. The Duma provoked a heightening of tensions in relations between two natural allies — Moscow and Kiev. Furthermore, this heightening of tensions has perfect chances of evolving into an undisguised confrontation — particularly so if a CPRF candidate wins the presidential elections. In this case the assistance that Malorossiya [traditional Russian name for Ukraine, literally, 'Little Russia'] could receive will increase tenfold, and Kuchma will have to work hard to pay it off.

As yet Moscow has already obtained a nuclear power for a neighbor. Moreover, speaking in Prague, Christopher said for the first time in such a harsh tone that there can be no horse-trading with Moscow over the East European countries' accession to NATO. And let Seleznev talk about a tempest in a teapot as long as he pleases...

P.S. On Wednesday morning the Duma opted to conduct yet another experiment: More than 300 deputies voted for improving economic and cultural ties with Taiwan. It is hard to imagine who threatened the deputies all day long and with what, even though it is clear to any fool that China is no joke at all. In the evening they voted on the subject once again. It was decided to leave it in the minutes so as if nothing happened. So, they in China may sleep tight...

Russia: Moscow Examines EU-Iran Relations

NC2303150996 Moscow Voice of Russia World Service in Persian 1600 GMT 22 Mar 96

["Commentary of the Day" feature]

[FBIS Translated Text] Recently, meetings between Iran and European countries have become an issue. In the past, one of the United States' main foreign policy objectives has been isolation of Tehran.

In Europe, however, the countries have their own perspective on the issue. The EU [European Union] has in practice refrained from following the unilateral economic-commercial embargo of the United States against Iran that was announced earlier by President Bill Clinton. Now, when the issue of Tehran-Washington talks does not arise, the possibility of talks between the EU and Iran is much greater.

In any case, the Europeans do not believe there is an unconditional or definite possibility of such talks as was evident by (Susannah Anili's) [as heard], the Italian foreign minister, remarks a few days ago. We are aware that Italy is the current head of the EU. According to (Anili), the bilateral talks between the EU and Iran depend on whether the government of Tehran is prepared to clarify its position on the condemning of terrorism.

In simple terms, this means that Europe is seeking a clear signal from Tehran on Iran's willingness to compromise with the EU on this issue. In addition, there are official documents to this effect. After all, in the recent meetings among EU members in Palermo, Italy on the island of Sicily, Iran was called upon to condemn international terrorism. According to European foreign ministers, Iran should state this categorically once and for all.

The head of Italian diplomacy (Susannah Anili) commented on the upcoming visit by a three-member EU delegation to Iran. The delegation will be made up of representatives from Spain, Italy, and Ireland who are the former, current, and future heads of the EU, respectively. (Anili) stated that the denunciation of terrorism will be the central topic of this meeting.

Observers believe that Iran can [?concur] in this regard. Tehran has repeatedly declared that it has suffered greatly from terrorist attacks and cannot possibly support international terrorism which the United States and Israel are constantly accusing Iran of; however, there is a point to be noted here. In Iran, while condemning terrorism, efforts are made, in general, not to define or explain it specifically. When terrorism is mentioned in Europe, it is first and foremost referring to the radical Islamists and fundamentalists, including those in the Middle East.

Accordingly, it is possible that in the upcoming visit by the three-member EU delegation to Tehran, a special kind of approach will be adopted. Apparently, the European countries expect Tehran to denounce the specific signs of terrorism, especially in Palestine, Lebanon, and Algeria.

Russia: Russian-Japanese Talks on Salmon Fishing Deadlocked

LD2403174396 Moscow ITAR-TASS World Service in Russian 0508 GMT 24 Mar 96

[By ITAR-TASS correspondent Vyacheslav Bantin]

[FBIS Translated Text] Tokyo, 24 Mar — Attempts to reach a compromise at the latest annual Russo-Japanese talks on salmon fishing, which ended in Tokyo on Saturday, proved to be unsuccessful. The sides have decided to continue the talks in Moscow at the beginning of April. The "sticking point" is the Japanese side's wish to reduce the amount of compensation payable to Russia for the fishing in Japanese waters of salmon of Russian origin, ITAR-TASS was told today by Aleksandr Rodin, first deputy chairman of the Russian Committee for Fishing.

In recent years the Japanese side has annually been paying Russia compensation that is designed to cover some of the cost of research into salmon, and their breeding and protection. According to the conditions of last year's agreement, the maximum volume of fishing by Japanese fishermen of red fish of Russian origin in Japan's 200-mile zone amounts to 5,123 tonnes, and in Russia's economic zone about 15,000 tonnes.

"This time the Japanese side proposed leaving the quotas for salmon fishing in Japanese waters at last year's level, but to reduce the volume of Russia's annual compensation for this type of fishing by approximately $1.5 million, which we believed was unacceptable," Aleksandr Rodin noted. He pointed out that it was difficult to agree on a reduction in volume because "the expenditure by Russian enterprises on the reproduction of salmon and the carrying out of scientific research is not only not being reduced, but is increasing from year to year."

Tokyo's plans to set up a 200-mile maritime economic exclusion zone around Japan in accordance with the 1982 UN convention on the law of the sea have complicated the talks somewhat. In connection with this, the Japanese Government plans at the end of March to adopt a decision giving Japanese fishermen the right to free fishing in this zone. "But as regards salmon of Russian origin this approach is unacceptable from the point of view both of international law and the bilateral agreements previously concluded," Aleksandr Rodin noted. He pointed out that should Tokyo adopt this decision Moscow will not rule out the possibility of lodging an official protest. "We clearly stated at the Tokyo talks that we consider impermissible the gratuitous fishing by the Japanese of salmon of Russian origin in the Japanese maritime economic zone," the head of the Russian delegation said.

Russia: Chernomyrdin: Peace in Bosnia Remains Fragile

LD2303121296 Moscow ITAR-TASS in English 1203 GMT 23 Mar 96

[By Aleksandr Kondrashov, Valeriy Sevryukov]

[FBIS Transcribed Text] MOSCOW, March 23 (Itar-Tass) — Peace remains fragile and real reconciliation a long way off in Bosnia, Russian Prime Minister Viktor Chernomyrdin said today addressing the Moscow meeting of the five-nation Contact Group.

"The tragic exodus of Serb residents from Sarajevo, the problems in the relations within the Moslem-Croat federation, the mutual manifestation of fear and hatred make one seriously apprehend a resumption of armed clashes," Chernomyrdin said.

"For this reason it is right and well-timed that your meeting, which for the first time is held by such a representative membership, is concentrating just on civilian aspects of the peace accords," he continued.

Chernomyrdin called for pooled efforts of the Contact Group and international organisations. All "should show, not by words but by deeds, a demanding, but also fair and impartial approach in both appraising the acts of all Bosnia parties and giving them the so crucially needed aid and assistance," Chernomyrdin said, adding that Russia is doing so.

The history of the Bosnia crisis indicates the need for a strong Organisation for Security and Cooperation in Europe as a resort for Europeans at times of emergency, he went on to say.

The organisation needs "effective tools for preventive diplomacy, a legal foundation, a common approach of state members to peace-making," the premier said.

"All of us should remember the lessons of the Balkan history of the 20th century. The setting up of opposed coalitions is fraught with tension and war," Chernomyrdin said.

"The Bosnia crisis has proved conclusively: The challenges to European security have been engendered not by military problems but rather by difficulties in social transformation of new states multiplied by unsettled ethnic conflicts," he said.

The safest path of the evolution is a real pan-European cooperation in consolidatuion of democratic institutions, encouragement of economic reforms and protection of minorities, Chernomyrdin summed up.

Russia: Federation Council Delegation Completes Minsk Talks

MM2203165996 Moscow ROSSIYSKAYA GAZETA in Russian 23 Mar 96 p 1

[Unattributed report under the rubric "Yesterday, Today, Tomorrow": "Russia-Belarus: Strengthening of Integration"]

[FBIS Translated Text] A Russian Federation Federation Council delegation headed by Yegor Stroyev is in Belarus on an official visit. Yegor Stroyev has met with Belarusian President Alyaksandr Lukashenka and Supreme Soviet Chairman Semyon Sharetskiy. He has addressed a Belarusian parliament session. Following meetings at the Foreign Ministry and the CIS Executive Secretariat and a press conference at the National Press Center, he departed for Brest.

Yesterday President Alyaksandr Lukashenka of Belarus arrived in Moscow for political consultations with the Russian leadership and a discussion on questions of expanding integration processes between the two countries.

Russia: Lukashenka Views New Treaty Between Belarus, Russia

LD2303144096 Moscow Russian Public Television First Channel Network in Russian 1200 GMT 23 Mar 96

[From the "Novosti" newscast]

[FBIS Translated Excerpt] After his meeting today with [Russian] Prime Minister Viktor Chernomyrdin, Belarusian President Alyaksandr Lukashenka made a statement to the effect that a treaty on deepening integration between Russia and Belarus might be signed as early as on 2 April. [passage omitted]

[Begin Lukashenka recording] I will answer your questions, keeping in mind that the Russian president's press secretary will give you a detailed report. We have reached agreement on the substance of our talks; therefore, I will give only a general outline.

We are due to sign this treaty, which is, I emphasize, about a union and commonwealth — we will call it that. It will be a treaty that will be open for all states to join. As you know, Kyrgyzstan and Kazakhstan have also expressed a wish to join this, or let us say, a corresponding treaty. However, their position is somewhat different. They are not ready to participate in the supranational bodies, but have said that they are ready to conclude a treaty which has international bodies. Well, this could be called for the time being a mini-CIS, but it is a step further than the present CIS. Therefore, in all likelihood this quadripartite treaty will be signed at 1500 on 29 March, and the Belarusian-Russian treaty on the formation of a union state with the total retention of sovereignty of the two states will be signed on 2 April.

I think a transitional period of between 18 months and two years will be needed, and over these 18 months to two years work will be carried out on all the problems right up to, perhaps, a common constitution which will be put to a referendum. But this problem is being discussed, including the matter of currency. Both documents will be ratified by parliament without any doubt whatsoever. We have guarantees on this from the State Duma of the Russian Federation and from our Supreme Council. There will be full independence and sovereignty and free accession to and departure from the treaty. Article 1 states that a state may leave the treaty after giving six months' notification to the other side. [end recording]

Russia: Medvedev Says Russia, Belarus To Sign Integration Treaty

LD2303152596 Moscow ITAR-TASS in English 1501 GMT 23 Mar 96

[By Andrey Shtorkh]

[FBIS Transcribed Text] MOSCOW, March 23 (Itar-Tass) — An integration accord between Russia and Belarus is being drafted and might indeed be signed on April 2, the Russian president's spokesman Sergey Medvedev told Itar-Tass on Saturday.

"Russia and Belarus are going to sign the treaty on deeper integration, but this does not mean that any new state is in the making," Medvedev said, commenting on the Friday meeting between the Russian and Belarusian Presidents, Boris Yeltsin and Alyaksandr Lukashenka.

"Indeed, Russia and Belarus are going on the road of integration more faster than other members of the Commonwealth of Independent States," Medvedev said.

"This case is a question of the two states' closer union or community which is planned to be built on principles of equality, democracy, social orientation of the market economy," he stressed.

"However, independence, sovereignty and territorial integrity of the states are recognised," Medvedev added.

Medvedev said that Russia and Belarus are drawing closer to each other within the CIS framework. The newly emerging community better compares with the European Union which has its hymn, flag, parliament and budget, Medvedev said.

As for the common budget, he explained that Russia and Belarus would deduct part of their national budgets to an "integration budget."

"No pooling of the two states' budgets is planned," Medvedev stressed. He explained that the "integration budget" refers to the funding of common projects and organs of the new union.

Medvedev confirmed that the setting up of a supreme body to chair the union had been discussed during Lukashenka's visit to Moscow.

"It will be probably called the Council of Union or will have another name," Medvedev said.

The top body is to include the Russian and Belarusian presidents, prime ministers, speakers of parliaments and integration committee chairman.

The integration committee, Medvedev clarified, is expected to be a new "standing executive body to conduct the practical work and ensure the activities of the new union."

He also confirmed that presidents of Russia, Belarus, Kazakhstan and Kyrgyzstan are expected to hold a summit meeting in Moscow on March 29 to sign a package of integration documents.

Russia: Zyuganov Welcomes Integration With Belarus

LD2403172296 Moscow INTERFAX in English 1359 GMT 24 Mar 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] MOSCOW, March 24 (Interfax) - Chairman of the Communist Party of Russia and presidential hopeful Gennadiy Zyuganov has welcomed the agreement between the Russian and Belarusian presidents regarding the creation of a union between the two countries in the near future.

The Communist Party's program aims at "accelerating integration between former Soviet republics," Zyuganov told Interfax Sunday. He said this was also a priority fixed in his election platform.

Zyuganov said he was confident that the State Duma (Russian parliament's lower chamber) would ratify the future treaty on the union between Russia and Belarus and hail the future agreement between Russia, Belarus, Kazakhstan and Kyrgyzstan on closer integration which is to be signed in late March.

Zyuganov said he was glad that the agreement on creating the Russian-Belarusian union was reached "shortly after the State Duma adopted its resolution of March 15 [on denouncing the USSR breakup]." This resolution made such an agreement between Russia and Belarus possible because the Duma's decision was "based on the results of the referendum on March 17, 1991, (when the majority of the then USSR voters voted to keep the USSR together)," Zyuganov said. "One can believe that the Russian executive power carries out the Duma's decision on accelerating integration between former Soviet republics rather energetically," he said.

Russia: Zhirinovskiy Says Road to India Lies Through Belarus

LD2303231296 Moscow INFORMATSIONNOYE AGENTSTVO EKHO MOSKVY in Russian 2130 GMT 23 Mar 96

[FBIS Translated Text] "The signing of the treaty on the creation of the union of Russia and Belarus is the implementation of the program of the Liberal Democratic Party of Russia [LDPR]," LDPR leader Vladimir Zhirinovskiy said in an exclusive interview to Moscow Echo radio station. "We support that, this is necessary, this is good."

According to V. Zhirinovskiy, "there is a need to act more rapidly: Next comes Eastern Ukraine, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan — once again the road to India. In this way we will have 20 million sq km by the end of the century, 250 million happy Russians, and ultimate liberation from communism, from pro-Western orientation, when Russia will be a civilization in itself. We will be friends with the Arabs, with Iraq, Libya, we will trade with China. Everything will be splendid." The LDPR leader thereby proposed that "Transcaucasian brothers should not worry: They will not be taken into the union."

V. Zhirinovskiy thinks that a single president and a common parliament should stand at the head of the union. In his view, temporarily "two presidents and a State Council could be retained, which consist of representatives of the two parliaments, and at the end of the century or the following year elections to a unified parliament could be called."

In V. Zhirinovskiy's opinion, it is "easiest of all" to resolve the problem of the Armed Forces: "They will all be subordinate to Russia's minister of defense, a single General Staff will be set up, there will be a single uniform, and we will have a single enemy: NATO, the United States, and Turkey. We will be friends with China, India, and Japan."

"The likes of Shevardnadze, the Aliyevs, and Karimovs will quake with fear. They will not know which way to run. No one needs them in NATO," the LDPR leader thinks.

Touching on the economic aspect of the problem, V. Zhirinovskiy said: We will not take the Belarusian economy in hand. Minsk refrigerators will go to our unified space. The Belarusians will feed us. Vans will be going along the Minsk highway day and night. The customs have already been removed, the transport arteries are open, the "little hares" [reference to the Belarusian ruble] will run away, the ruble will take its place."

Zhirinovskiy stressed that on 2 April, when the Russian-Belarusian treaty is signed, "the implementation of the LPDR's program will start, the recreation of a mighty Russian state, without communists and fascists."

Russia: Yeltsin Denies Belarus Treaty To Establish 'Single State'

LD2503072996 Moscow ITAR-TASS in English 0719 GMT 25 Mar 96

[By Andrey Surzhansky]

[FBIS Transcribed Text] MOSCOW, March 25 (Itar-Tass) — Russia and the Belarus Republic will sign an integration deepening treaty on April 2, but it will not be a treaty on the establishment of a single state, President Boris Yeltsin said at the airport here today before leaving for an official visit to Norway.

Asked by Itar-Tass, the President denied some earlier statements that "there will be a single state". "Under no circumstances. Somebody has confused something. It will be a treaty on deeper integration," Yeltsin stressed. He noted that "the Belarus Republic has gone much further than the other CIS countries along the road of integration, practically advancing towards the unification of the two states".

Russia: Yeltsin Says 4 CIS States Ready To Sign Integration Treaty

LD2503094796 Moscow ITAR-TASS in English 0906 GMT 25 Mar 96

[By Andrey Surzhanskiy]

[FBIS Transcribed Text] MOSCOW, March 25 (Itar-Tass) — "The Heads of four CIS states — Russia, Belarus, Kazakhstan, and Kyrghyzstan — will sign a treaty on deeper integration and the creation of a corresponding body on March 29," President Yeltsin told journalists here today before flying for an official visit to Norway. He pointed out that the other CIS nations were yet unprepared to sign this treaty because they had no corresponding normative bases. "All the countries must have identical normative bases for the reform," the President noted.

Yeltsin said that he had touched on this subject during his talks with the heads of some other CIS nations, including Uzbek President Islam Karimov. According to Yeltsin, the Head of the Uzbek State agreed in principle to join the treaty, but only after a corresponding normative basis was created.

Yeltsin pointed out that the treaty would remain open for other CIS countries to sign.

Russian: Lukin: NATO Maneuvers in Norway 'Clearly Aimed at Russia'

BR2203135296 Barcelona LA VANGUARDIA in Spanish 20 Mar 96 p 8

[Interview with Vladimir Lukin, chairman of the Duma Foreign Affairs Committee, by Rafael Poch in Moscow; date not given: "According to NATO Doctrine the USSR Used To Be the Enemy and Now It Is Russia"]

[FBIS Translated Text] Moscow — Today Moscow is receiving [NATO Secretary General] Javier Solana while NATO is carrying out maneuvers in Norway with a scenario of "aggression by a neighboring authoritarian regime," taken straight from the classic Cold War days — something which does not go down well in Moscow. The Russian Fleet has responded by carrying out exercises in the Barents Sea, dispatching its aircraft carrier "Admiral of the USSR Kuznetsov" and other ships there. In this interview Vladimir Lukin, the chairman of the Duma Foreign Affairs Committee and former ambassador to the United States, who represents the most pro-Western group in the Russian political spectrum, sets out his moderate vision of the European security system.

[Poch] How has NATO changed since the dissolution of the Soviet Union and the Warsaw Pact?

[Lukin] For the most part it is the same. It has changed its statements, words, and phrases, but the content is the same.

[Poch] On what do you base your opinion?

[Lukin] Before the enemy was the USSR; now it is Russia.

[Poch] What evidence do you have of this?

[Lukin] This can be seen by studying NATO's military doctrine, the scenarios of its military maneuvers, and the placement of its troops.

[Poch] What is your view of NATO's maneuvers in Norway?

[Lukin] They are clearly not aimed at preventing drug-smuggling between Spain and Pakistan. They are evidence that NATO's plans have not changed. They are clearly aimed at Russia, and at specific Russian military installations.

[Poch] And simply because of the scenario under which they are being carried out?

[Lukin] Of course. Norway is a front-line NATO country. Everyone knows who they are being aimed at.

[Poch] What are you expecting from Javier Solana's visit?

[Lukin] He is coming to tell us two things: that NATO is going to enlarge anyway, and that that is very good for Russia. I respect Solana, but I think it is hardly surprising that Russia does not like him.

[Poch] What could be the consequence of ignoring Russia's interests? What kind of response might it give?

[Lukin] All security issues can be resolved, either through close coordination with NATO — by making joint decisions — or without it. For example, when we had three times as many conventional forces as NATO, NATO deployed tactical nuclear weapons along the border with the Warsaw Pact. Now it is NATO that has three times as many conventional forces. So what do you think this suggests to us?

[Poch] You stress the need to strengthen the OSCE [Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe], but nobody is taking any notice. It looks like you are stuck in a blind alley.

[Lukin] Us? No, it is the European security system that is in a blind alley. The OSCE is currently a weak organization. It might become strong and it might not, but there are other opportunities for building up a pan-European security system. All that is needed is the political will, because it does not make sense to propose any plan when people are telling you: "Propose what you like, but NATO is going to enlarge anyway."

[Poch] Are not the West's maneuvers justified by the risk of an authoritarian regime emerging in Russia and the possible attempt to recreate a USSR?

[Lukin] There is the risk of an authoritarian regime taking root in places where there is a democracy, beginning with Athens, but this danger can be increased or decreased from the outside. Western Europe is greatly increasing the risk of an authoritarian regime.

[Poch] What kind of link do you see between the NATO maneuvers in Norway and Solana's visit?

[Lukin] That it is hard to think of anything more ill-timed. It is a great gift to those of our political forces that say: "Look at the friends we have." This shows that in NATO there are elements which are either short-sighted, or which want to provoke a reaction in Russia to justify enlargement.

Russia: Yeltsin Departs for 2-Day State Visit to Norway

LD2503071096 Moscow ITAR-TASS in English 0645 GMT 25 Mar 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] MOSCOW March 25 (Itar-Tass) — Russian President Boris Yeltsin has left for a two-day State visit by air to the Kingdom of Norway. The visit, which will be made at the invitation of Harald V, the King of Norway, and will have a busy schedule.

A tentative programme for the visit includes about 20 activities, during which — a rather rare occasion for Norway — the Russian Head of State and his wife Naina will be accompanied almost everywhere by King Harald and Queen Sonja, Kremlin sources have told Itar-Tass.

The Radisson SAS Plaza, one of Oslo's largest hotels, will be Boris Yeltsin's official residence where he will head for immediately upon arriving at Gardermoen airport.

An official welcoming ceremony for the distinguished Russian guest is to take place in Palace Square. At the close of the ceremony Boris and Naina Yeltsin, accompanied by the Royal couple, will head for the Royal Palace. Official Russo-Norwegian contacts will begin for the first time during the visit there during a luncheon given on behalf of King Harald.

Russia: Yeltsin Comments on Norway Agenda Upon Arrival

LD2503111696 Moscow ITAR-TASS World Service in Russian 1021 GMT 25 Mar 96

[By ITAR-TASS special correspondents Igor Pshenichnikov and Andrey Shtorkh]

[FBIS Translated Text] Oslo, 25 Mar — "We are living with Norway in a very friendly manner, and I think that our talks will be normal, quiet, businesslike, and constructive," Russian President Boris Yeltsin stated in a conversation with journalists on arrival at the Norwegian capital's Gardermoen airport. According to the Russian president, "we have some problems which we have to discuss together." Boris Yeltsin recalled that he has arrived in Oslo at the invitation of Norwegian King Harald V. "Although my visit was postponed, I have come all the same," the head of the Russian state added.

According to Boris Yeltsin, the subject of NATO expansion eastwards will most likely be touched upon during the talks, since Norway is a member of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization. Boris Yeltsin expressed the hope that Norway will take an understanding attitude toward NATO expansion.

Touching on Russian-Norwegian relations, Boris Yeltsin stressed that "we have never had any misunderstandings in the thousand-year-long history of our relations," and therefore, in his view, there will not be any misunderstandings in the future either. Boris Yeltsin referred to Norway as a "quiet, friendly country."

At Gardermoen airport, the head of the Russian state was met by Princess Maertha Louise of Norway, as well as by a group of Norwegian officials. Then, the president of Russia went to Palace Square, where the official ceremony to welcome Boris Yeltsin and his wife will be held by Norwegian King Harald V and Queen Sonja.

Political Issues

Russia: Yeltsin Spokesman Dismisses Zyuganov Claim as 'Provocation'

LD2203204996 Moscow INTERFAX in English 1908 GMT 22 Mar 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] MOSCOW, March 22 (Interfax) — An official representative of the Russian presidential press service dismissed "as nonsense and provocation" the statement by Communist Party leader Gennadiy Zyuganov that a state coup had allegedly been prepared in the country.

"The Communist Party faction tries to continue devising a scheme whose essence was revealed in the well-known March 15 resolution by the State Duma," the official said in reference to last week's resolution effectively denouncing the 1991 Belovezh Accords which disbanded the USSR and founded the CIS.

Zyuganov's statement is aimed at "fanning internal political tension and provoking the president into making sharp moves from which he refrained despite the Communist Party faction pushing him to it," the presidential press service's representative said.

Russia: Zyuganov Notes Grachev, Kulikov Role in Preventing Coup

LD2203202996 Moscow NTV in Russian 1900 GMT 22 Mar 96

[Correspondent Aleksandr Zinenko video report from the U.S. ambassador's residence; from the "Segodnya" newscast]

[FBIS Translated Text] At 1700 this evening, U.S. Secretary of State Warren Christopher had a meeting with representatives of the political elite in Spasso House, the official residence of the U.S. ambassador. The meeting went on behind closed doors for two hours. Television crews were allowed in the hall for less than a minute. The absence of [Grigoriy] Yavlinskiy and [Yegor] Gaydar, who had been invited to the meeting, was striking. [Vladimir] Zhirinovskiy was not there either, but only because the LDPR [Liberal Democratic Party of Russia] leader had not been invited because of his political views, the press was told.

After the meeting with Christopher, Gennadiy Zyuganov described the conversation in Spasso House as useful, and unexpectedly announced that Pavel Grachev and Anatoliy Kulikov had prevented an attempted third putsch in Russia. Let me remind you that at the start of the week, the Communists said that following the Duma decisions on the Belovezhskaya Pushcha accords, Yeltsin might opt for extreme measures.

[Begin recording] [Zyuganov] At the start of this week, many processes in the country were placed in doubt, and it was only the courage and responsibility of very many people, those who carry out orders and directives, that prevented an attempt to carry out another coup and impose a state of emergency, which would have been a catastrophe for Russia and for the whole world. It seems to me that all those who were involved in this process contributed their might...

[Zinenko, interrupting] Grachev and Kulikov.

[Zyuganov] Both Grachev and Kulikov and all close advisors took a pretty reasonable stand, as did the prosecutor's office and the Constitutional Court and many others. [end recording]

[Zinenko] Gennadiy Zyuganov denied rumors of a split in the Communist Party, commenting that this is just intrigue on the part of one of the Russian Federation newspapers. Zyuganov preferred not to answer a question about his own chances and those of Boris Yeltsin in the elections. [video shows Warren Christopher presiding over meeting, Zyuganov being interviewed outside Spasso House gates]

Russia: Commentary on 'Unexpected' Duma Events, Kremlin 'Leak'

MM2203194996 Moscow PRAVDA in Russian 23 Mar 96 p 1

[Report by Boris Slavin and Valentina Nikiforova: "'Passion' Week"]

[FBIS Translated Text] Last week was full of unexpected (and frightening) statements and random facts and rumors appearing in the official mass media. This included a bomb apparently being planted in the State Duma, vigilant OMON [Special Purpose Police Detachment] members rifling through documents on deputies' desks, the landing of a Spetsnaz regiment at Khodynskoye field, and the strange vote by the leader of the communist faction against the communist chairman of the Duma. And finally, the information "leak" from the Kremlin about the possible postponement of the election, which was announced by the poet A. Tyazhlov, governor of Moscow Oblast and favorite of the president and the premier.

How should we deal with this flow of springtime surprises? One thing is clear: Someone needs all this, and it all suits someone's purpose. Maybe this is the response by the "party of power" to the fact that the rating of the president is still rising slowly? Or an attempt to deflect the Russians' attention away from the fact that March is nearing its end, and the promised solution as regards the payment of wages is still nowhere in sight? Or maybe it all smells of kerosene, and the authorities want to radically change the political situation in the country — ban the Communist Party again and disperse the State Duma, which has been exposed for having links with it.... History is silent about the rest, as the saying goes.

So what did actually happen this week? If you shake off the springtime mood, a great deal begins to look very ordinary. It turns out that there was no bomb in the Duma, as the tracker dogs pronounced, and therefore there was no reason to look for a backup building for the parliamentarians. The regiment, it turns out, was called in to do some voluntary work and harvest Khodynskoye field, and G. Zyuganov's vote against G. Seleznev was only a technical mistake, an accidental movement of the hand — "obvious nonsense," according to G. Zyuganov himself. The postponement of the election, as confidential Western sources are suggesting, was the consequence of intrigues by "a particular overseas" department. Consequently, everyone can rest easy...

We were about to send this report to be typeset when an item of "surprise news" came in: It was reported on the radio that wages have been paid to as many as 44 regions...out of 89. So our reference to the springtime mood was inappropriate. As for the other facts cited in the article, then nowadays there can be smoke even without a fire, as the saying goes.

Russia: Moscow Metro Stations To Be Videotaped To Deter Terrorism

MK2303143996 Moscow MOSKOVSKIY KOMSOMOLETS in Russian 23 Mar 96 p 1

[Unattributed report: "Metro Passengers To Be Videotaped"]

[FBIS Translated Text] Passengers at the busiest stations of the Moscow subway will soon be videotaped.

MOSKOVSKIY KOMSOMOLETS has learned that the subway management opted for such a step in connection with persistent rumors about upcoming terrorist acts. Formerly the metro stations with the heaviest passenger flows were monitored by using television cameras near which station employees were constantly on standby. Very soon it turned out, however, that this procedure is not very effective, because the employees in charge of the television cameras had to leave them now and then and are physically unable to keep track of everything that is going at the platform. From now on their presence will no longer be necessary.

In the near future everything that is displayed on the "station" television cameras will be videotaped on special tapes. Initially such tape recording devices will appear at a few central stations of the Moscow metro. Once the recording is finished (a set of three tapes will be required for 24 hours), the tapes will be locked in a special safe and may only be released by authorization of a subway manager. If no one has requested a tape within three days, it will be used for recording again.

The subway management expects the introduction of such tight supervision to speed up the investigation of any wrongdoing or emergencies in the Moscow metro.

Russia: Yeltsin Invites Duma To Back Down or Face Showdown

MK2203140196 Moscow NEZAVISIMAYA GAZETA in Russian 22 Mar 96 p 1

[Report by Natalya Konstantinova: "The President's Bill. Boris Yeltsin Decided To Help the State Duma Break a Legal Deadlock"]

[FBIS Translated Text]

Document

Draft

On Ensuring the Stability of the Legal System of the Russian Federation and on Reaffirming Russia's International Obligations

(...) Article 1

To reaffirm the validity of laws and statutory and other normative enactments by the state authorities of the Russian Federation, which have not lost their legal force, in conformity with the procedure defined by the Russian Federation Constitution currently in force, including the Agreement on the Creation of the Commonwealth of Independent States, signed on 8 December 1991 in Minsk and ratified by the RSFSR Supreme Soviet, and the RSFSR Supreme Soviet resolution of 12 December 1991 "On the Renunciation of the Treaty on the Formation of the USSR."

Article 2

To reaffirm the validity of the international obligations of the Russian Federation which, as regards the Russian Federation, entered into force prior to the present Federal Law taking effect, including on the basis of the Agreement on the Creation of the Commonwealth of Independent States, signed on 8 December 1991 in Minsk and ratified by the RSFSR Supreme Soviet, and the RSFSR Supreme Soviet resolution of 12 December 1991 "On the Renunciation of the Treaty on the Formation of the USSR."

[Signed] B. Yeltsin

Conflict

The collision that has evolved between the state power branches following the State Duma's adoption of the controversial resolution on the effective renunciation of the Belovezhskaya Forest Agreements has evoked not only a broad international response, but has also confronted the Duma and the president with a dilemma. Boris Yeltsin made his choice in the form of a new draft law signed on the morning of 20 March, "On Ensuring the Stability of the Legal System of the Russian Federation and on Reaffirming Russia's International Obligations." This bill is a reflex document; that is to say, a document created in response to the 15 March 1996 resolution.

According to well-informed sources in the Kremlin, Boris Yeltsin, with the aforementioned bill, decided to dot all the i's, stipulating that any foreign policy initiatives, no matter where they might originate, must be coordinated between the executive and legislative branches; otherwise this could lead to the disruption of Russian statehood.

As concerns the parliamentarians' choice, it will be made when the bill passes through all the requisite bureaucratic procedures in parliament and reaches them. The Kremlin, however, is ready for the most unpredictable reaction.

The Duma repeatedly raised the question of the CIS's fate and the causes of the disintegration of the Soviet Union, but no formal decisions were ever made. The problem did not acquire its documentary form until 15 March. On one hand, the resolution is not a law, but like many other working documents by the parliament's lower house, rather a declaration of intent. Incidentally, in the last few days the decision's initiators have increasingly stressed this fact, describing the document as political rather than statutory. This is not quite so, however, because the first part of the resolution contains that legal provision — "to deem invalid the resolution by the RSFSR Supreme Soviet of 12 December 1991, 'On the Renunciation of the Treaty on the Formation of the USSR' — which has aroused the most controversy. This is what has caused apprehension, not only on the part of the Russian president, but also on that of his Commonwealth colleagues.

The current reaction by the Communists, who have — to all appearances — already taken at least one step back, goes to show that the document was in effect conceived as rhetorical and political. Even so, the initiators understood all too well that the reaction and fallout from it would be far sharper than the text of the resolution itself, which now seems to be simply an innocent piece of preelection propaganda.

There are two possible options the deputies can predictably use. Option one: They will adopt the law and thus, with their own hands, adjust their 15 March resolution. Of course, they will not really be able to save face in the process, but this will at least be reasonable. The second option is to reject the bill, with all the conciliation and other foot-dragging procedures involved. If the second option is chosen, this will mean that the trial balloon flown to test the authorities and public opinion is only a move aimed at codifying the "political" initiative into law in the event of a Communist victory in the elections.

The second option is a sure road to confrontation between the branches. People in the presidential structures, however, maintain that those who are expecting [a repetition of] August 1991 or October 1993 will be disappointed.

There is yet another fact showing that the Duma has decided to seize the political initiative. On 20 March it voted in a law to increase the minimum wage, which runs absolutely counter to the government's and the president's efforts to address the problem of wage arrears. First, in this event, the president and his representatives will never be able to repay the debts to public sector employees within the established time frame, which will provoke another wave of discontent; second, the entire "Center-Regions" program, which is personally supervised by the president, will just go down the drain.

Russia: Implications of Yeltsin Draft Law on 'Stability' Viewed

MK2303100696 Moscow KOMMERSANT-DAILY in Russian 22 Mar 96 p 3

[Report by Georgiy Bovt and Natalya Kalashnikova: "Belovezhskaya Forest Is Being Cut: Chips Are Flying" ['rubyat — shchepki letyat' — pun based on Russian proverb meaning 'You can't make omelets without breaking eggs']]

[FBIS Translated Text] The Duma's "Belovezhskaya Forest resolutions," which in effect call into question the legal stability of virtually all branches of power, prompted Boris Yeltsin to make a subtle move. Exercising his power to initiative legislation, the president sent to the Duma a draft federal law "On Ensuring the Stability of the Legal System of the Russian Federation and on Confirming Russia's International Obligations." If it is adopted, the odious provisions of the Duma resolutions will be undone by the deputies themselves. If the Duma fails to adopt it, it will tie the legal problem into such a knot that it will never be able to untie itself.

Yeltsin's initiative aims to remove the constitutional-legal uncertainty brought about by the "Belovezhskaya Forest resolutions," preserve the constitutional order, and reaffirm Russia's international obligations. According to KOMMERSANT-DAILY's sources, the first article of the bill confirms the validity of all normative enactments by the Russian state authorities, including the agreement on the creation of the CIS and the RSFSR Supreme Soviet's 12 December 1991 resolution "On the Renunciation of the Treaty on the Formation of the USSR" — that is to say, the same enactments which were easily and enthusiastically invalidated by the Duma last Friday. Article 2 reaffirms the validity of all of the Russian Federation's international obligations which entered into force before the adoption of the president's bill.

The president's move may seem a compromise: The bill does not talk about the repeal of the Friday resolutions as a whole, but rather the abandonment of some of its provisions related to the effective renunciation of the Belovezhskaya Forest Agreements and the reconstitution of the USSR. That is to say, only those which lead to the total legal disruption of the establishment and undermine Russia's international standing.

Incidentally, the first reaction to the Duma's 15 March decisions smacked of irony: Apparently the election campaign has led the Communists, who initiated the resolution on "the reconstitution of the USSR in Russia" (and this is in effect the gist of the two decrees passed on 15 March), so far that they have created a kind of legal absurdity. Yesterday Duma First Deputy Speaker Aleksandr Shokhin described the situation in detail in an interview with KOMMERSANT-DAILY.

So, if the Duma insists that its resolutions have the force of law (and the 15 March resolution repealed another resolution — of 12 December 1991 — which had the force of law, and the Duma must realize that a law may only be repealed by another law), the formal consequences should be as follows. First, the entire constitutional field of the Russian Federation is destroyed, because if the Duma is allowed to act unconstitutionally, then all power branches will be allowed to do the same. Second, the situation with the resolutions can be interpreted also in the sense that by invalidating the CIS, the Duma has invalidated itself. In this context the apparently absurd proposal by Sergey Yushenkov to convene a Congress of Russian People's Deputies of the USSR simply brings the whole situation to its logical conclusion. Third, in connection with the "abolition of the CIS," the only legitimate entity is the president of the RSFSR as part of the USSR. (Not at all Gorbachev, as some maintain, because the 15 March resolution restores the USSR only insofar as concerns Russia). As is known, Boris Yeltsin was elected president in June 1991. Fourth, on 15 March the Duma voted in favor of "leaning on the will of the majority of the country's population, as manifested in the nationwide referendum on 17 March 1991." Prior to signing the document, Speaker Gennadiy Seleznev amended it at his own discretion. The result was: "in a USSR referendum." Meanwhile, on 17 March 1991 six republics of the former USSR did not vote; the list of questions before the referendum varied in different republics; in the RSFSR it also included the question of introducing the presidency as an institution. The referendum results are still moot, and this also includes the issue of why the will of all the USSR peoples, manifested before the August coup, is interpreted in the spring of 1996 as an imperative for the Russians.

This logical chain can be pursued further. The most interesting part, however, is this: Whereas immediately after the Friday resolutions were adopted the prevalent opinion was that they have no meaning, today the legal absurdity created by people in Okhotnyy Ryad [street in Moscow where Duma building is located] is increasingly perceived as reality. For instance, yesterday even UN General Secretary Butrus-Ghali expressed "concern" over the Duma's resolution. "This resolution does not correspond with the generally recognized norms of international law that were enshrined in the UN Charter," Teresa Gasto [name as transliterated], the general secretary's spokesperson, said on his behalf. Leni Fisher, chairperson of the Council of Europe Parliamentary Assembly, which Russia has just joined (in Strasbourg, and both Gennadiy Zyuganov and Vladimir Zhirinovskiy, who supported the 15 March decision, were present there), considers the State Duma's decision to revoke the Belovezhskaya Forest Agreements "an irresponsible move."

The CIS heads of state are meeting for an emergency summit at the end of March for the sole purpose of discussing the situation that has evolved. This was announced yesterday by Yeltsin's press secretary, Sergey Medvedev. To all appearances, the CIS presidents should be expected to produce a very sharp reaction to the Duma decision. A day earlier, however, in a fit of passion Speaker Seleznev dropped another hint: We, lawmakers from the republics, will also get together. Presumably the reference is to the parliamentary pro-Communist opposition in the ex-USSR republics. The heads of state could well perceive this as an attempt to create a "fifth column" on their territory and as incitement toward revolt and civil war — but this time on a CIS scale. It does not matter in what form this "fifth column" will materialize: as restitution of the CPSU or as "national salvation committees."

In response to the Duma actions, the Russian president has made a tough but logical move. His bill proposes both — as a package, so to speak — renouncing the idea of restoring the USSR (to which the Communists will hardly agree) and confirming the validity of all of Russia's current international treaties. It is difficult to do the second without the first. But not to confirm international treaties means to declare war on the whole outside world. At this stage it is not clear yet how the Communists can extricate themselves from this tricky situation. Yeltsin is indicating that this is their problem. Incidentally, the status of Yeltsin's law — a federal law — presupposes the following procedures. It is to be passed by both houses and go through a strict legal appraisal procedure. So the Duma will not manage to insert purely propagandist, legally incoherent formulations in it either.

The Duma is apparently taking a time-out. Yesterday Gennadiy Seleznev noted that the president's proposals will be considered by the State Duma in the first half of April at the earliest, when the deputies return from their constituencies. Seleznev, cited for his slipshod handling of the legislative procedure in connection with the adoption of the 15 March resolution, now says that with respect to the Yeltsin draft the procedure must be observed in full. According to the speaker, if Yeltsin's proposals were submitted to the Duma "red-hot, in raw form, that would have been a bombshell exploding in the Duma hall, which would have produced nothing but a scandal." It seems, however, that the main scandal still lies ahead....

Russia: Duma Officials Comment on Events of 16-17 Mar

LD2403180596 Moscow Russian Public Television First Channel Network in Russian 1945 GMT 23 Mar 96

[FBIS Summary] The lead item in the first edition of "Days," a Saturday evening program by investigative journalist Aleksandr Nevzorov broadcast on Russian Public TV, concerned events around the building of the lower house of parliament, the State Duma, during the weekend of 16-17 March.

The program opens with a clip of the Duma chamber during a session on a date not specified, followed by brief interviews with four members, who are not captioned. The first, unidentified, says he is in the habit of arriving at the Duma building at 0650 local time every day. On the day in question, which he did not specify, there were hundreds of servicemen outside the building, just on Pushkin Street alone. Asked if he had heard talk of a bomb threat to the building, he said he had not; what he had heard was that there was a lethal level of radiation in the building.

The next interviewee, identifiable as Sergey Baburin, says he too, had heard the radiation story, though later there was talk of a grenade in the building. The third also refers very briefly to a possible grenade. The fourth interviewee is Vladimir Zhirinovskiy, who says that the way the operation was conducted showed spring madness typical of Russia — next time it should be carried through to its proper conclusion.

Nevzorov then introduces the program from the studio, as follows: "Hello. As you see, there was what one might call a determining event this week that set the tone for everything that has happened. It could be thought of as a trivial event in the context of present-day Russia, since the most puzzling aspect now is that it is totally impossible to ascertain whether this key event actually happened or not. But the fact is that last Sunday, the State Duma of Russia was sealed off by troops from the Kantemirov and Taman Divisions with armored personnel carriers and the rest. Deputies were not allowed in. For some reason all of this was described as a three-phase command and headquarters exercise, though as far as one can judge from the accounts that have been given it was actually the executive authorities' response to the Duma's revoking of the Belovezhskaya Pushcha agreements, that same event that had set the whole of Russia agog. An event which, strangely out of character for Russia, ended without casualties. Indeed, it ended as mysteriously as it had begun, as the troops from the Kantemirov and Taman Divisions along with their armored personnel carriers disappeared from the streets and also from the documents and the video recordings. And everyone maintained silence throughout the week about what had gone on. Nevertheless, it has been possible to find out something."

Nevzorov moves on to other stories, returning to this one toward the end of the program to show an interview he conducted with Viktor Ilyukhin, chairman of the State Duma Committee on Security. The following exchange takes place:

[Nevzorov] "The State Duma has been instructed to get to the bottom of what actually happened here, under the pretext first of a radiation scare, then under the pretext of searching for a bomb in the State Duma building. And why armored personnel carriers and military units not stationed in Moscow were brought in to search for a bomb or deal with a radiation scare.

[Ilyukhin] "Let me tell you again that today I will be setting out my own view, and speaking on the basis of information available to me by virtue of the office I hold. These events unfolded following a vote. But at some point those representing a pro-force group — or rather those people who were bent only on finding a solution, or a way out of the situation, based on force — these people were of course exerting pressure, and their influence on the president proved to be more powerful than that of the group of people favoring a constitutional path. In my view, or rather, in my understanding, three presidential decrees — or rather draft decrees — were prepared, decrees that he was being pressed to sign. The first...

[Nevzorov, interrupting] "Prepared by?

[Ilyukhin] "By certain people. I do not think I will be rushing ahead today and, so to speak, disclosing all the results that [words indistinct] we receive here in the Security Committee [words indistinct]. The first decree concerned the banning of the activity of the State Duma. The second decree concerned the banning of the activities of the Communist Party. And the third decree concerned postponing the presidential election for an indeterminate period — probably about two years."

An editing cut was apparent in the recording at this point. Ilyukhin continues: "As early as Saturday, troop units were already on the move. Additional special purpose forces were brought into Moscow. The second and fourth divisions — the Kantemirov and Taman Divisions...[sentence as heard incomplete] The city of Moscow's militia forces were put on full alert.

"But then the situation developed according to a somewhat different scenario. And I am very pleased that such a scenario was found. I am very pleased that the forces of reason — and these exist in some abundance in the president's entourage — prevailed. And I am very pleased that it was precisely those forces that were able to persuade Boris Nikolayevich Yeltsin to refrain from these extraordinary measures. This is to the honor of those who attempted to persuade him not to take such steps. If those steps had been taken — and let me say this again, this is information, my information concerning those three decrees — then I fear you and I would not be sitting here today. I fear that there would have been military clashes; and not only military, but clashes among civilians too, probably all over Russia. And I fear that by such a step, a senseless step, we might have provoked civil war that would no longer have been confined to the north Caucasus, but would have affected the whole of Russia."

[Nevzorov] "But why did this not actually come to anything? Knowing the character of the authorities, and how much they like fireworks in the center of the capital, how they like to see tanks on the move, how much pleasure they take in all of this, knowing the quite indomitable — incidentally, I believe that there has been no fundamental change in Boris Nikolayevich's character in all these years; his character has remained just as it was. So what happened? Why did nothing happen, given that all the prerequisites for something to happen were present?

[Ilyukhin] "I should like to stress this point very strongly. Today we should be thankful. Thankful to those people who spoke up and held out for a peaceful resolution of this problem. And it is to the honor — I say this yet again — there are some pretty courageous and intelligent people around the president. I quite simply want to pay tribute and respect to them and voice thanks to them. Thank you for saving Russia from civil war."

Back in the studio, Nevzorov sums up the episode, commenting that only in Russia would all sides keep quiet for so long about such an event. At the end of the week communist leader Gennadiy Zyuganov broke the silence with a more or less accurate account of what had happened. Both Yeltsin and Zyuganov had obviously wanted to gain election propaganda out of the episode, but the way it had been handled said little for either of their campaigns.

Russia: Chernomyrdin Interviewed on Current Topics

LD2303201696 Moscow Russian Television Network in Russian 1726 GMT 23 Mar 96

[Interview with Russian Federation Prime Minister Viktor Chernomyrdin by correspondent E. Kuznetsova; place, date not given — recorded]

[FBIS Translated Text] [Announcer] Deeper integration between Russia and Belarus is undoubtedly the most discussed subject at the moment. No treaty has been signed yet, but both states have obviously made a step towards each other.

[Kuznetsova] Many will ask themselves whether this step is sort of a promotional stunt in the election campaign or whether the idea of creating a union is just a trick to cancel the elections.

[Chernomyrdin] It will be either a union or a commonwealth, perhaps, or some other form. Many are viewing the word union with caution. Many people are afraid of this word. I see nothing extraordinary in it. We want close and normal relations, civilized relations between states, especially between the states that belonged to one family, to one state for 70 years. We want to live a normal life with our neighbors. We don't want our people to experience degrading difficulties — degrading, just degrading. What will be its name? We will consult our people, perhaps. But everything depends on the level we will achieve. That is the first point.

Second, I have already said that there is no connection with the election campaign. In the previous question ... [pauses] a joint Russian-Belarusian working group for deepening integration worked throughout 1995. All the year, on a permanent basis. Therefore there is no connection with the election campaign. I repeat that yet again.

As regards the Duma taking that extraordinary step of issuing a statement on repealing, I have already spoken about this and I don't want to repeat myself. I hold the same view: it is not quite clear what their goals were. As for the recommendations of the state — the president and the government, I mean — to work on creating or deepening integration, I have already told you that we are constantly working on this. Either one must know what the leadership of the country — the government and the president — are doing, or at least take part in some activities somehow. Therefore, we don't need to be prompted.

[Kuznetsova] Will a union be open for other states? Will it be possible to leave it?

[Chernomyrdin] This is one of the prerequisites. First, it will be open. Moreover, we want as many members as possible. The four states will reach the first stage on the 29th; the second stage, a deeper one, will be reached on the 2d, on a bilateral basis with Belarus, and then, of course, others may join. I would very much like to see them joining. Speaking about us and Belarus, the two states will still be independent and will be represented in international organizations.

As for the agreement in question, it is our internal affair, our internal affair.

[Kuznetsova] Does it provide for the joint protection of the borders?

[Chernomyrdin] There is a lot of things in it, a whole range of things. Of course, it deals with the borders, their protection, a customs union, an economic union, coordination in drafting our laws — all this has been provided for.

[Kuznetsova] Viktor Stepanovich, I would like to ask you about the elections. Can the movement Russia Is Our Home [NDR] still be viewed as the right wing of the president's election campaign?

[Chernomyrdin] First of all I would like to say that the social and political movement Russia Is Our Home has firmly supported Boris Nikolayevich Yeltsin in his bid for reelection. Therefore, we are now working on this. We have held a broad council and discussed ... [pauses] it has been held on a democratic basis. We have had overwhelming support. And taking into account the solid background of the organization — we have regional branches in more than 80 regions, which are also involved in the work. NDR is now represented — in the government, naturally, — but also in parliament. The NDR faction is the second biggest faction in the State Duma. Therefore the NDR's attitude ... [pauses] I would like to say that NDR must make itself heard. It can do more and influence many aspects of the country's life. Moreover, the NDR is involved in the election campaign to support Boris Nikolayevich in his bid for reelection.

[Kuznetsova] How do you assess the performance of the NDR faction in the State Duma? Don't you think it works not as actively as the Communists' faction, for instance, or the Liberal Democratic Party [LDPR]?

[Chernomyrdin] Well, our faction is young, this is a new faction. Many deputies have been elected for the first time. They haven't got as much experience as the Communists' faction, or the LDPR faction, or the Yabloko faction. If you look at the factions' composition, you will see that many deputies have already worked in parliament — in this Duma or in the previous one. Many worked in the Supreme Council. Therefore, as for me, I would like it to be better represented in the work on many draft laws. I would like it to be more active in the State Duma. But the faction is getting going and will get there. We have made some headway in drafting laws. The faction takes an interest in the work of the government and attends the government's meetings. Any faction may do so, deputies from any faction may do so. But the deputies of the NDR faction are mostly active in attending the government's meetings and conferences. Therefore, the faction will be heard.

[Kuznetsova] The nonpayment of wages is one of the most acute problems at the moment. How is the government tackling this problem? Has there been any progress?

[Chernomyrdin] I think the mass media are providing extensive coverage of our work. The task we set for ourselves — it has been defined by the president — is to sort out the main problems of wages in March. I spoke about this last week, in my previous interview, and I'm speaking about this now. This is a matter of deep concern to the government. And we will sort it out. It is not a simple question, there are complex processes involved. This is not just a question of paying wages. We have undertaken — and this is the right thing to do, this is necessary — to pay off all the debts. Some of them date back to 1995 or even 1994, and we were unable to clear them. This delay in payments to the public sector organizations must be ... [pauses] we will do this work. But I repeat once again: that does not mean that we have overcome all the difficulties. This is not as simple as that. There are difficulties with paying wages to industrial workers, to builders, to workers in various branches of economy. I'd like to take this opportunity to warn the management of the enterprises of all levels and all forms of property — and it concerns everyone — wages must be paid. We, the management, must do everything to ensure that our people receive wages, pensions, everything, all the benefits — it concerns child benefits, disability benefits, pensions — everything must be done on time.

[Kuznetsova] The government is known to guarantee the financing of certain branches of the economy — defense enterprises, for instance. But there is the problem of partners and nonpayments. How is the government tackling this problem?

[Chernomyrdin] This is a single problem. Today I signed a schedule of payments to our defence enterprises for the first time in four year. In effect, this is a state order — a financing schedule for 1996. We could not draw up and sign such a schedule earlier because of some problems. So I have signed it this year. I signed it today. It concerns the defense enterprises, scientific enterprises and their partners. We will do everything to ensure that this schedule is observed. This is necessary. This concerns a whole stratum in our budget, and a very important stratum too. We will do everything to ensure that the schedule is observed.

[Kuznetsova] Speaking at a meeting of the Federation Council, a majority of the senators said the Duma's latest decision on the well-known Belovezhskaya Pushcha agreements were giving cause for talking about postponing the elections. What do you think about this?

[Chernomyrdin] Well, there is the constitution. We all must obey the constitution. The constitution and law. If the constitution is violated, it must not be tolerated. No one is allowed to do that. No one. Well, there is and will be much speculation about this matter, I think. Such decisions can bring us no good, except for disgrace for the country. You see? Disgrace. This is the exact word. I wouldn't like to return to this subject. I am not accustomed to speaking about something more than once. But that was a disgrace. You see? Disgrace. We have no right to let that happen, so that Russia becomes a laughing stock, so that people fail to understand us, so that Russia once again becomes an unpredictable country. This must be ruled out.

Russia: Yegorov Departs Tyumen for 'Urgent Meeting' With Yeltsin

LD2203181696 Moscow ITAR-TASS in English 1722 GMT 22 Mar 96

[By Vladimir Zuikov]

[FBIS Transcribed Text] NOVY URENGOI, Tyumen region, March 22 (Itar-Tass) — Head of the Russian president's administration Nikolay Yegorov, who arrived in Russia's Tyumen Region on Thursday [21 March] for a three-day visit, unexpectedly interrupted his trip on Friday and said he was leaving for Moscow.

"I will have an urgent meeting with the president on Saturday afternoon," he told reporters.

Yegorov also said at the meeting with reporters that it is necessary to step up the preparation for the presidential elections.

Supporters of Boris Yeltsin should explain to voters the strategy of the president's reforms and, by using examples, show what the president's team has made. Yeltsin's main contribution is maintenance of Russia's statehood. As far the Belovezh agreement was concerned, Yegorov said that "it saved Russia."

Speaking about the Chechen problem, Yegorov noted that the conflict had no solution only by force or only through negotiations. The complex of measures being taken in the conflict zone is to give a result desired by all Russians, he said.

Russia: Yeltsin Planning To Restructure Campaign Staff

MK2303102796 Moscow KOMMERSANT-DAILY in Russian 23 Mar 96 p 3

[Report by Natalya Arkhangelskaya: "Reelection of President Is President's Own Job"]

[FBIS Translated Text] Shortly before the decisive preelection battles, President Yeltsin is regrouping his forces. To all appearances, he has made a decision on a serious restructuring of his campaign staff, which will involve the replacement of a number of key figures.

First of all, it has been decided to drop the very word "staff," along with its head — First Deputy Premier Oleg Soskovets. The appointment, which appeared odd right from the start even to Oleg Nikolayevich [Soskovets] himself, has now been reversed, and the deputy premier has safely moved into some new agency — an Election Campaign Council. It [the Council] is supposed to include, in addition to him, top statesmen — Premier Viktor Chernomyrdin and the head of the Presidential Security Service, Aleksandr Korzhakov, among others. They will work there strictly without pay, which is an honor and a quiet job. As for the troublesome affair of getting elected for a second term, the president has decided to take that on himself. The president's deputy in steering the preelection process will be his first aide, Viktor Ilyushin. He will, without a doubt, look more logical in this position than his de facto predecessor Soskovets for two reasons: First, Ilyushin is already actively involved in Yeltsin's election campaign. Second, specialists who are also working to get the current president reelected are convinced that this is the only man from among Yeltsin's immediate entourage who can competently organize this process.

One could consider the second victim of the restructuring of the president's election team to be Vladimir Babichev, head of the government support staff and chairman of the executive committee of the NDR ["Russia Is Our Home"], who has been excluded from it [the election team]. He was officially appointed to his second position as early as after the parliamentary elections, though it was actually he who controlled the NDR's election campaign. According to KOMMERSANT-DAILY's information, it was Korzhakov's deputy, General Georgiy Rogozin, who insisted on dropping him from the Yeltsin team. Informed sources argue that things are heading toward retiring Mr. Babichev from his job in "Our Home" as well. The official version: Ever since Babichev was appointed head of the NDR's executive committee, there have been no positive changes in the structure he was put in charge of (even if this was not strictly a job, but a social obligation). In actual fact, Babichev's foes are inclined to accuse him of virtual sabotage. All these things may have some connection with information about Babichev's friendly relations with leaders of the CPRF [Communist Party of the Russian Federation], which appeared in the press way back before the December elections. I should add that such apparent disgrace for someone who is close to Chernomyrdin cannot but, even if indirectly, hit back at the premier himself.

New men are taking the place of those dropped. Former Press Minister Sergey Gryzunov has been tasked with relations with the press.

One can name, among those who will continue to work for the president's team, Deputy Premier Yuriy Yarov, who retained his positions there despite the scrapping of the executive committee he used to head. Presidential Chief of Staff Nikolay Yegorov will be, as before, in charge of work with the regions, whereas preelection analysis will still be tackled by former State Duma deputy and current president of the "Politika" fund Vyacheslav Nikonov, whose weight in this campaign seems to be growing. According to participants in Yeltsin's meeting with political scientists in the Kremlin last Wednesday, Nikonov had a long one-on-one conversation upon its completion. Also staying in his position is former Presidential Chief of Staff Sergey Filatov, who has been given what is perhaps the toughest job in the election campaign — public relations. To help him tackle this thankless task are "people's houses" [narodnyye doma] — the NDR's campaign idea — which are supposed to be given a new lease on life.

This preelection know-how is something long forgotten: "people's houses" existed in pre-Revolutionary Russia for a good cause — to facilitate two-way communication between society and the authorities. There has already been registered, or are being registered, in towns and villages, more than 50 "houses," the founders of which are regional branches of parties and movements of a reformist and democratic character. Strictly speaking, this is the democrats' attempt to create an analogue of the Communist obkoms and raykoms that work directly with the population, the only difference being that the number of the latter on Russia's territory is much greater — tens of thousands.

The "people's house" in Moscow has been set up in the "Meridian" House of Culture, with Sergey Filatov as its director and "Russia Is Our Home" as one of its founders. The "houses" run on the funds of their founders and ideologically close sponsors who can fund the campaign of the candidate they back. In the given case, he is Boris Yeltsin. According to KOMMERSANT-DAILY's information, money from the so-called Chubays Fund is channeled precisely into Moscow's "people's house," with virtually everybody who works for Yeltsin's election campaign being considered its staffers.

And the last thing. The restructuring of the president's [election] team will also involve moving. The stay of Yeltsin's staff in the Hotel "Mir" is at an end, and all the staffers are moving over to the "President Hotel."

Russia: Premier: Postponing Presidential Elections 'Impossible'

LD2303171696 Moscow ITAR-TASS in English 1653 GMT 23 Mar 96

[By Gennadiy Yezhov]

[FBIS Transcribed Text] MOSCOW, March 23 (Itar-Tass) — Russian Prime Minister Viktor Chernomyrdin said that any postponement of presidential elections in Russia slated for June, 1996 is "impossible."

Chernomyrdin told Itar-Tass on Saturday that "postponing elections in the country would mean plunging Russia into instability."

The prime minister, who is on the council of the campaign for the reelection of President Boris Yeltsin for a second term (the first meeting of the council chaired by Yeltsin was held today), said that he discusses this issue with the president's senior adviser Viktor Ilyukhin on a regular basis. "We meet and we talked to each other by telephone," he added.

Chernomyrdin stressed that "the election work will get going faster, at a different pace, after Boris Yeltsin has been officially registered as a presidential candidate."

The prime minister said that his movement, Our Home Is Russia, "must also have its say" in the presidential elections. "We must work harder and play a more active role in the election campaign," he noted.

He said the movement "has built a solid organisational basis and set up branches in practically all regions. It also has broad representations in the government and is the second largest force in the parliament."

Russia: Premier Denies Accord With Belarus Linked to Elections

LD2303185596 Moscow ITAR-TASS in English 1823 GMT 23 Mar 96

[By Gennadiy Yezhov]

[FBIS Transcribed Text] MOSCOW, March 23 (Itar-Tass) — An agreement on further integration between Russia and Belarus, which is expected to be signed on April 2, will be based on the principle on sovereignty of the two countries, Russian Prime Minister Viktor Chernomyrdin told journalists on Saturday.

"Whether the new agreement on integration between Russia and Belarus, which is planned to be signed on April 2, 1996, will become a treaty establishing a new union state or a new commonwealth of states will be determined in the final text of the agreement which is still being finalised," he said.

"I personally like the word 'union'," the premier noted adding that the agreement will "preserve the sovereignty of Russia and Belarus and their individual representation in international organisations."

Chernomyrdin stressed that Russia and Belarus "have undoubtedly advanced along the path of integration."

He said that the government has been instructed to finalise the agreement by April 2. The document calls, among other things, for a common budget to fund joint programmes and establishes joint bodies.

The prime minister categorically denied any linkages between the upcoming signing of the agreement and the campaign for the reelection of Russian President Boris Yeltsin for a second term. "This event is not connected with the elections. We have been working on this agreement the whole year," he said.

He noted that the final parameters of the agreement will be determined by the presidents, the governments and the people of the two countries.

Chernomyrdin did not rule out the possibility that a future union between Russia and Belarus may be "modeled on the European Union."

Asked about the functions of supra-national executive bodies that the two coutries will set up, Chernomyrdin said they will be determined in the agreement. At the same time, he said that both nations should seek to unify their legislations and set up a common budget.

Russia: Yeltsin's Alleged Plan To Dissolve Duma, Ban CPRF Viewed

MK2303144296 Moscow ZAVTRA in Russian No. 12, Mar 96 (signed to press 19 Mar 1996) p 1

[Unattributed "Intelligence report of 'Den' security service" under the "Scoreboard" rubric: "A Coup Thwarted by Kulikov"]

[FBIS Translated Text] The threat of an unconstitutional coup, about which Gennadiy Zyuganov told journalists, has been confirmed by sources close to the presidential staff.

At 0800 on Monday morning Yeltsin chaired a meeting at the Kremlin that was attended by Kulikov, Soskovets, Korzhakov, Barsukov, Ilyushin, and others. The question under discussion was the possibility of imposing a state of emergency, dissolving the Duma, and banning the Communist Party [CPRF] in connection with the Duma's denunciation of the Belovezhskaya Forest accords. Yeltsin said that an edict to this effect had already been drawn up. Internal Affairs Minister Anatoliy Kulikov rejoined that such presidential measures would be unconstitutional. "In this country it is my business to judge what is constitutional and what is not," the president interrupted the minister. Kulikov noted that General Prosecutor Skuratov and Constitutional Court Chairman Tumanov think the dissolution of the State Duma and the imposition of a ban on the CPRF to be an unconstitutional act. Yeltsin, getting increasingly angry, asked: "How can you know the views of Skuratov and Tumanov? They are not here, are they?" "They asked me to convey their views through me because they were not invited," Kulikov responded. "Go on then, hold your own separate meetings with them," the president snapped at him.

Kulikov expressed his astonishment at Defense Minister Pavel Grachev's absence from the meeting. The Internal

Affairs Ministry [MVD], the minister said, cannot get down to carrying out such operations alone without the army. The army might well disobey and come into conflict with the MVD. The troops are irritated to the extreme, the minister asserted, antigovernment sentiments run strong among them, and they are highly unlikely to repeat their performance of October 1993. Following up on this idea, Kulikov said that it is impossible to fight on two fronts — with Dudayev in Chechnya and against the people and the CPRF in Russia. Furthermore, if it comes to repressions against the Communists, who denounced the Belovezhskaya Forest accords, the Criminal Code has no article on punishment for encroachments on the sovereignty of Russia, and only provides for responsibility for the dissolution of the USSR.

Further, notwithstanding Yeltsin's increasing irritation, he noted that arrests, if there are grounds for making them, could target the "Union of Officers," provided that it has combat detachments, but not communists indiscriminately. "In these conditions," Kulikov said, "you, Boris Nikolayevich, stand to benefit most from emerging as the father of the nation, not from taking a one-sided position."

This resolve by Kulikov prompted Yeltsin to say that the edict which he prepared would not be signed. "I am displeased with you, minister," he said in conclusion.

The source who released this report thinks that the edict on dissolving the State Duma and banning the CPRF was drawn up by Baturin and sponsored by Korzhakov and Soskovets, who are deliberately prodding Yeltsin to violent measures, which in the final analysis might prove the president's undoing.

Luzhkov, who returned from Paris and learned of the meeting at the Kremlin, said that he would not back Yeltsin's unconstitutional steps under any circumstances.

The explosives that were found and deactivated in a Moscow bus could be an element of a conspiracy aimed at dissolving the Duma and banning the CPRF. Possibly the special services planned the blast as proof of the communists' terrorist intentions, but after Yeltsin's refusal to put the aforementioned edict into effect the bomb was disarmed.

Meanwhile, reports that the Tamanskaya and Kantemirovskaya Divisions, and also a brigade deployed at Teplyy Stan, were put on alert status together with special officer formations set up on the basis of the Dzerzhinskiy Division, made up of officers who know Moscow districts like the back of their hand, have been confirmed.

Russia: Zyuganov Challenges Yeltsin to Roundtable Discussion

LD2203214696 Moscow NTV in Russian 2100 GMT 22 Mar 96

[From the "Segodnya at Midnight" newscast]

[FBIS Translated Text] [Announcer Vladimir Kara-Murza] Gennadiy Zyuganov [Communist Party leader], confirming his reputation as a well-balanced interlocutor and public speaker, made so bold as to summon his chief rival to a proposed duel.

[Begin Zyuganov recording] We have an interest in having honest cooperation and competition. I propose to Boris Nikolayevich to take part in a roundtable discussion on any of the programs — NTV television knows how to do this and gives the participants a pretty tough time, too — to discuss all the vital problems, instead of grabbing a pen and signing decrees that cannot be implemented. [end recording]

[Kara-Murza] It is not yet clear how the head of state regards this proposal, though the presidential press service has already come up with its first reaction to a number of other comments made by the communist leader at the U.S. ambassdor's residence.

Russia: Gorbachev May Cede Presidential Race to Yavlinskiy

LD2203205396 Moscow INTERFAX in English 1908 GMT 22 Mar 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] ST. PETERSBURG, Mar 22 (Interfax) — Former Soviet President Mikhail Gorbachev told a news conference in St. Petersburg Friday that he is prepared to quit the presidential race "at some stage" in favor of Yabloko leader Grigoriy Yavlinskiy. Gorbachev expressed solidarity with Yabloko's program.

According to him, a positive program must be put forward to counter the choice between incumbent President Boris Yeltsin and Communist Party leader Gennadiy Zyuganov. Gorbachev believes that "if the June 16 elections are fair, Yeltsin will not rise; he has lost popular confidence."

Gorbachev described the candidacy of Liberal Democratic Party leader Vladimir Zhirinovskiy as "unlikely."

Assessing his own role in the country's history, Gorbachev said "I wanted to and I gave people freedom and paved the way for democracy." He described his 1991 resignation as "the only possible way to avoid bloodshed."

Gorbachev intends to visit the Russian-Estonian border near Ivangorod on March 23.

Russia: Yavlinskiy: No Plans To Join 'Third Force'

LD2203150596 Moscow ITAR-TASS in English 1415 GMT 22 Mar 96

[By Lyudmila Alexandrova]

[FBIS Transcribed Text] MOSCOW, March 22 (Itar-Tass) — Presidential candidate from the Yabloko movement Grigoriy Yavlinskiy does not intend to join the so-called Third Force, but conducts talks with various politicians, including Svyatoslav Fedorov and Aleksandr Lebed (also presidential candidates), to create an election coalition, Viktor Sheinis, a member of the Yabloko parliamentary group and an ideologist of the movement, said in an interview with Itar-Tass on Friday.

According to Sheinis, the sides did not discuss the question on who will be the presidential candidate. "I believe that we shall insist that Grigoriy Yavlinskiy be a candidate from the coalition," Sheinis stressed.

"The sides are now discussing the common position on platform planks and on what a victorious coalition would do. Sheinis called the talks "difficult and delicate enough" and did not want to speak about preliminary results.

Until recently when prospects for creating a "Third Force" coalition were discussed, activists spoke only about a coalition between two presidential candidates — Svyatoslav Fedorov and Aleksandr Lebed.

Earlier, Aleksandr Rutskoy and leader of the Russian People's Union Sergey Baburin were also suggested as possible participants in such a coalition. However, Rutskoi joined the Communist bloc of Gennadiy Zyuganov.

It looks like that Baburin will do the same later on. However, when a joint statement against the denunciation of the Belovezh agreement (which was signed by Lebed, Fedorov and Yavlinskiy) was published, a new configuration of the "Third Force" came to the fore.

However, it will be not an easy thing for the Yabloko bloc leader to bring behind him two other candidates who are backed by some part of the electorate, without promising them something substantial.

It the talks fail, Lebed and Fedorov are likely to join hands together. If this happens, they will have to decide soon who will stand out as a coalition candidate. If we are to judge by statements and interviews, Fedorov looks more inclined to concessions.

Russia: Zhirinovskiy: 'Third Force' Poses Coup Threat

LD2203183596 Moscow ITAR-TASS in English 1729 GMT 22 Mar 96

[By Pavel Kuznetsov]

[FBIS Transcribed Text] MOSCOW, March 22 (Itar-Tass) — Russia's notorious ultra-nationalist Vladimir Zhirinovskiy said on Friday that there is a certain "third force" in Russia which "has a whole army in Moscow" posing a threat to President Yeltsin.

Speaking at a news conference in the State Duma (lower house of the parliament), Zhirinovskiy claimed that in the Russian capital the "force" factually plotting another coup has "20.000 cars with four men in each" and the whole "army" is controlled from a single centre.

According to Zhirinovskiy, the mystic "third force" can raise a 80.000-strong army in any place in Moscow and, for example, seize the Kremlin before the (elite) Tamanskaya or Kantemirovskaya division (deployed in the Moscow region) crosses the Moscow ring road."

In his words, the "force" poses a threat to President Boris Yeltsin. Zhirinovskiy said he was 90 percent sure the June 16 elections will not be held at all. "Everything will be decided in April-May", he said.

However, he failed to identify any "third force" member saying that they are familiar to everyone. "They are those who often visit Western countries and have sound positions in Russia," he claimed.

Explaining his refusal to reveal the names, Zhirinovskiy said he did not like the prospects of being summoned to courts, having assured journalists that "after the coup they will speak for themselves."

Russia: Zyuganov Instructs Agents on Campaigning Tactics

MM2103142796 Moscow SOVETSKAYA ROSSIYA in Russian 19 Mar 96 p 2

[Report by Zhanna Kasyanenko: "Trust Put in Them"]

[FBIS Translated Text] On Saturday a meeting took place between the as yet only officially registered presidential candidate, Gennadiy Zyuganov, and his agents.

Around 6 million signatures were collected for Zyuganov. Up to 70,000 people were involved in this work. All were unpaid. Opening the meeting, Gennadiy Andreyevich warmly thanked all those who had carried out this very difficult work in such a selfless and exacting manner.

Some 200 people are listed as acting as agents for the single candidate representing the people's patriotic forces. They include communists and non-party member, pensioners and students, journalists, engineers, and workers. Hero of Socialist Labor Makhmud Esambayev, People's Artists Lyudmila Zaytseva, Tatyana Avdeyenko, and Nikolay Penkov, the columnist, Iona Andronov, the writer, Aleksandr Kazintsev, and other famous people are representing the creative intelligentsia, whose art is incorruptible, national, and imbued at all times with a deep patriotism.

They will now have to campaign on behalf of their candidate and talk to people about him. It will require a lot of energy, tact, and conviction to win over to the single opposition candidate no less than 15 million more people. The most important thing to do is to campaign using facts — facts about the life and deeds of the candidate himself. Which is why the debate was frank, forthright. The election campaign, Gennadiy Andreyevich said, should be based on the program of the coalition of people's patriotic forces. "We should set an example in our respect for the law and we should tell people that in the event of our victory, nobody who is capable of working for the good of the country and its people, who can heal, teach, provide heating and food, and maintain clean and orderly cities, need worry about his future or job." The future president's approaches to economic, staffing, and agrarian policy were examined in detail. Many questions were put to Gennadiy Andreyevich about his personal biography and his involvement in this or that event in the country. In particular his attitude to the Belovezhskaya Forest conspiracy was raised. "Here we have to abandon a simplified interpretation of the events," he said. "You are giving both Gorbachev and Yeltsin too much credit by saying that it was only they who destroyed the USSR. There also existed objective reasons for the central authorities becoming weakened: The administrative-edict system was already not working as it had during the forties and fifties, and the monopoly over ownership and the political truth was creating conditions for its collapse. Many people from Burbulis, Shakhray, and Dudayev to Gorbachev, Yakovlev, and Yeltsin used this as a basis for the country's destruction." As concerns the vote to renounce the 1922 treaty on the formation of the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics, it was actually Ivan Rybkin who played the most active role here, and there are still plenty of witnesses around who can testify to this. It is simple to verify this: There is a stenographic transcript of the Supreme Soviet session at which this was decided.

Gennadiy Andreyevich warned his agents against the slightest inaccuracies and against any embellishments whilst on the campaign trail. To be honest, this is actually unnecessary. It is not difficult to campaign on behalf of a person who has not tarnished his honor either with treachery or lies, and who possesses fundamental knowledge and has studied political systems. The difficulties and problems will not be created by the candidate himself or by his experience and life, but by his opponents. It is required of the agents today that they do not succumb to provocations, but preserve, come what may, a respectful attitude toward their opponents and the ability to convince using powerful arguments and not through the emotions. Zyuganov placed special emphasis on the fact that he has no enemies, only opponents. It is today very important to maintain this attitude of calm confidence and a statesmanlike approach to the future president's personality. Just such an approach will help to win the sympathy of the as yet undecided voters. The task that really needs to be accomplished is to win the support of new people.

Military & Nuclear Issues

Russia: Yeltsin Edict on April-June Military Draft Published

MM2503111796 Moscow ROSSIYSKAYA GAZETA in Russian 23 Mar 96 p 1

[Russian Federation Presidential Edict No. 406 signed by President Yeltsin in Moscow on 21 March 1996: "On the Drafting of Russian Federation Citizens for Military Service in April-June 1996 and on the Discharge from Military Service of Draftee Soldiers, Sailors, NCO's, Petty Officers, and Military Construction Workers Who Have Completed Their Set Period of Military Service"]

[FBIS Translated Text]

Synopsis [vypiska]

In accordance with the Russian Federation laws "On Defense" and "On Military Obligation and Military Service," I decree:

1. That 200,200 Russian Federation citizens born between 1969 and 1978 and without the right to exemption or a draft deferment be drafted to active military service in the Russian Federation Armed Forces and other troops and military formations in April-June 1996.

For Official Use

2. That draftee soldiers, sailors, NCO's, petty officers, and military construction workers who have completed their set period of military service be discharged into the reserve.

3. That the Russian Federation Government and Russian Federation component executive organs ensure fulfillment of the measures relating to the drafting of citizens for military service.

4. That the transportation of persons drafted for military service be carried out, as a rule, in groups on passenger trains or on chartered aircraft (ships).

The Russian Federation Ministry of Railways and the Russian Federation Ministry of Transport shall allocate the required amounts of rolling stock, aircraft (ships), or seats in passenger trains or on aircraft (ships) upon application from the corresponding command. These shipments shall be carried out within a set period, with safety measures ensured and with the costs of transport being charged on the basis of the existing mutually agreed tariff.

[signed] Russian Federation President B. Yeltsin

[dated] Moscow, the Kremlin, 21 March 1996
No. 406

Russia: Grachev's Rumored Dismissal, Possible Successors Viewed

MK2203113696 Moscow MOSKOVSKIY KOMSOMOLETS in Russian 22 Mar 96 p 1

[Report by Yuliya Kalinina: "A Three, a Seven, an Ace" [the winning set of cards in Pushkin's 'The Queen of Spades']]

[FBIS Translated Text] The stir in the mass media regarding [Defense] Minister Grachev's possible discharge continued up until last Friday. The invalidation of the Belovezhskaya Forest accords pushed into the background not only the problem of the defense minister, but also all the other issues on whose successful resolution Yeltsin's election chances hinge.

No rumor is empty in our kingdom and the one surrounding Grachev's dismissal is no exception. According to some information, a corresponding edict has already been drawn up and the aspirants have been interviewed. The supposed number of aspirants is five: the "civilian" deputy minister Kokoshin; Chief of the General Staff Kolesnikov; State Duma Deputy Gromov; Director of the Federal Border Service Nikolayev; and Minister of Internal Affairs Kulikov. Experts think that, at the moment, Kokoshin stands the best chances. Kulikov and Nikolayev may turn down the high position of their own accord, the reason being that they are not products of the "Defense Ministry" and so they have no reliable social base in the military department; that is to say, they have no team of devoted confederates. Bringing their own men into some other ministry is hard to do, and without your own team it is impossible to manage today's military department — which has gotten out of hand.

The worst position is Kolesnikov's — once in the ministerial position any of the [other] candidates would wish — owing to a number of reasons — to retire the "General Staff man." Kolesnikov's awareness of his tricky situation introduces into the contest all the elements of thrill and risk. An active search is on for incriminating evidence whose results end up either in the papers or on the presidential desk. No matter how the candidates for minister squabble between themselves, the top man has not made his choice and the edict on the resignation remains unsigned. The main reason is the same: the "mafia-clan" method of controlling the Armed Forces. To remove the minister would plunge the entire army into a spate of discharges and appointments, because a new chief would first and foremost be getting rid of his predecessor's people, putting "his own men" into key positions.

Personnel shuffles in the army are no danger in and of themselves, but it is wise to carry them out when the state is not waging war, is not looking forward to a coup d'etat, and when it is in at least a relative state of stability. What we do not have in the wake of the scrapping of the Belovezhskaya Forest accords is stability. At the same time we have a war on our hands and the prospect of "resolute actions" with regard to the State Duma.

The Communists, who panicked in connection with a "forcible solution" being planned by the president, had all the grounds for doing so. That the "Communist" fears are valid is confirmed by those who were in the Duma building Sunday when special subunits were searching for a bomb that had allegedly been planted. The search for the explosive device looked rather like an exercise, with commanders of the subunits looking around the grounds, their men looking around their assigned sectors and sort of "reconnoitering the area."

At any rate, whether the president chooses a "forcible" solution now or prefers the peaceful development of the situation, the decision on the [defense] minister will be made only after the situation clears up a little. And at any rate, this is not going to happen before the heads of CIS-member countries meet. The gory drama of the last Chechnya combing operation is supposed to be played out by that time, and a new minister would be able to get down to a clean job: the withdrawal of troops. Thus, Yeltsin will in one fell swoop gain three trump cards: the end of the war, Grachev's dismissal, and movement toward integration of the former republics.

Russia: Seleznev Interviewed on Military Issues

LD2403175996 Moscow Russian Television Network in Russian 0730 GMT 24 Mar 96

[Interview with Russian State Duma Speaker Gennadiy Seleznev by Tatyana Panova; place, date not given — recorded; from the "Aty-Baty" program]

[FBIS Translated Text] [Seleznev] Taking into consideration the vast size of our territory it is sufficient for us to have an army of up 700,000 men. That is the figure I would specify.

[Panova] That is a reduction.

[Seleznev] Yes, of course it is a reduction. After all there is already in point of fact a reduction at the present time. There could be a more significant reduction, if officers leaving the army received at least a minimum of guarantees. After all it is impossible, too, to serve as they are at present, where several families including small children are having to live in a single apartment. We are making a mockery of them.

[Panova] Before a serviceman leaves the service, should he not have an apartment in civilian life?

[Seleznev] That is what I say. There should be social guarantees that on leaving the army he could count on getting an apartment, work, and other things. There again I know that many military colleges are now teaching civilian specialities in addition to the main military profession. It is said that there are whole graduating classes where 90 percent do not go into the army, since the period of study at the college counts as the period of army service. So military colleges are also requalifying as civilian ones, but again it would be wrong to reproach these lads, as it is a poor army that they are not joining. However, if the army were actually provided with all that it needs, I am convinced that they would not simply do their service at these military colleges and then go off to civilian life, and that they would then actually serve in the army.

[Panova] Gennadiy Nikolayevich, who has the power to alter this situation that has come about?

[Seleznev] Well, it needs...

[Panova, interrupting] What can the State Duma do?

[Seleznev] In point of fact, the State Duma itself cannot do anything. It is right that military people have to carry out the tasks for which they joined the armed forces. Serving aboard a warship, I know my ship's regulations and know what is laid down and how to act in various situations. However, it is not the task of a fleet commander to draw up military doctrine, say, or an overall blueprint for reequipping the Russian Navy. We frequently shift something onto the military and tell them that they must do it. It is possible that everyone has nowadays been told to cope with difficulties the best they can but an officer should not have to get by with the best he can. What if there is suddenly no way to cope?

[Panova] Gennadiy Nikolayevich, were you in the army yourself?

[Seleznev] Yes, I was.

[Panova] What were you?

[Seleznev] I was a private, but I had an interesting time. After completing evening school and before my army service I intended to gain admission to Moscow Border-Guards College. I travelled there as a young civilian lad through the military commissariat, but I failed to get through the competitive admissions. There was a great deal of competition. I then went off to serve in the army, and I was called up to serve, not in the border guards but in the missile troops. I served not far from Plesetsk, which no longer has restricted status. I served a year there, but nevertheless I very much wanted to be admitted to the college. I was sent there, and this time as a soldier I went there again to the college at Babushkin in Moscow Region. I entered the college and became a student there. But then my health let me down, unfortunately, at the end of my first year and I was admitted to hospital. Then, although I wanted to remain at the college, I was rejected by the medical board. Therefore, as you see, I was in two quite different arms of the forces and all in just two years.

[Panova] Gennadiy Nikolayevich, what do you see as your ideal for the future Russian Army? How would you like to see the army in the future?

[Seleznev] First, I should like to see Russia with a strong army, a well-fed army, an army with, as we say in science and technology, state-of-the-art equipment, an army that understands its reason for existing in the state, an army that would of course not be involved in sorting out internal problems and all our political differences and squabbles, and especially an army that is not fighting against its own people. These are the main characteristics for any army, but such is regrettably not the case in our country at present. For the time being we have an army that has been undergoing reform for many years now, but I think that, as long as the army is being reformed by the military, we shall not reform it. I feel that civilian politicians should be primarily involved in the general blueprint for defense and military doctrine, involving also, of course, military politicians. But it should be the politicians who devise what they want from the army, draw up the necessary laws, and provide the army with everything it needs. Then probably it will be possible to speak of a new quality of existence for our army.

Russia: Northern Fleet Exercises in Barents Sea End

LD2403091396 Moscow Russian Public Television First Channel Network in Russian 0600 GMT 24 Mar 96

[From the "Novosti" newscast]

[FBIS Translated Text] The Northern Fleet's staff and command exercises have now ended. They were held in the neutral waters of the Barents and Norwegian Seas and involved more than 50 surface ships as well as nuclear and diesel submarines and naval aircraft.

The exercise area greeted us with stormy weather and winds which sometimes reached 30 meters per second. The whole of the fleet's general staff gathered on board the heavy nuclear-powered cruiser Admiral Nakhimov. Northern Fleet Commander Admiral Oleg Yerofeyev was in charge of the exercises. The aircraft carrier Admiral Kuznetsov, the flagship of the Russian Navy, joined the other warships in the exercise area after three month combat duty tour in the Mediterranean.

During the exercise, the fleet warships attacked a notional enemy, and practiced electronic jamming and producing smoke screens. Nuclear submarines carried out underwater missile launches, and surface warships destroyed the missiles using the Uragan antimissile system. The naval pilots of the aircraft carrier Admiral Kuznetsov provided cover for the squadron.

As is always the case, the exercises did not fail to attract NATO's attention. Their Orion reconnaissance planes flew constantly over the Northern Fleet warships. [video shows naval hardware during exercises]

Russia: Pacific Fleet Begins Large-Scale Command, Staff Exercises

LD2403100296 Moscow ITAR-TASS World Service in Russian 0326 GMT 24 Mar 96

[By ITAR-TASS correspondent Yevgeniya Lents]

[FBIS Translated Text] Vladivostok, 24 Mar (Itar-Tass) — Large-scale command and staff exercises under the leadership of Vladimir Kuroyedov, the new commander of the Pacific Fleet, began today in the Pacific Fleet. According to Captain First Class Viktor Ryzhkov, chief of the Pacific Fleet's press center, large forces will be involved in the exercises, including nuclear submarines, surface vessels of various classes, naval aircraft, land forces, and headquarters and administrative bodies of the fleet. It worth pointing out that this is the first time that command and staff exercises are being held stage by stage by means of a build-up of forces and equipment.

Russia: SVR Has No Evidence on Diversion of Nuclear Materials

LD2203205896 Moscow INTERFAX in English 1908 GMT 22 Mar 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] MOSCOW, Mar 22 (Interfax) — Russia's Foreign Intelligence Service (SVR) "has no concrete facts" on diversion of military nuclear materials from Russia's territory, press secretary of the SVR director Tatyana Samolis told Interfax Friday.

She was commenting on recent statements by CIA Director John Deutch in Washington.

According to Western information agencies, Deutch told a Senate subcommittee Wednesday that "the prospect of nuclear materials diversion from Russia is one of the main threats to U.S. national security."

Deutch named Iran, Iraq, North Korea and Libya among the countries striving to obtain nuclear technology and materials in the republics of the former USSR.

Deutch established that the Russians have undertaken a series of measures to strengthen guarding of its nuclear sites. However, the nuclear security of Russia's nuclear complex is deteriorating due to sharp shortages of resources.

However, Deutch "was forced to recognize that he has no proof of military nuclear materials diversion from Russia," Samolis said.

Federal Assembly

Russia: Duma Condemns U.S. Helms-Burton Law on Cuba

LD2203172896 Moscow INTERFAX in English 1533 GMT 22 Mar 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] MOSCOW, March 22 (INTERFAX) - Russia's State Duma Friday harshly condemned the Helms-Burton law envisioning tougher economic sanctions against Cuba.

The Duma passed a statement saying it repudiated U.S. pressure on Cuba and expressing serious concern about its possible negative after-effects.

"A dangerous precedent is being created, when the national legislation of one state is extended upon other countries' trade and economic relations in violation of the international communication practices established," it said.

The law was passed without considering the opinion of the overwhelming majority of world community members and contained norms contradicting international law, the Russian deputies underlined.

The inclusion of many provisions affecting Russia's economic interests in Cuba aroused resolute protest among the deputies. "Such actions contradict the principles of equality and respect of mutual interests, upon which Russian-U.S. relations should be built," they said.

The Duma recommended that the Russian government take measures to protect Russian entities trading with Cuba "from interference of third countries."

The Duma said it was ready to consider similar legislative measures, if needed.

Russia: Duma Issues Address to Army on Belovezh Vote

LD2203183696 Moscow ITAR-TASS in English 1719 GMT 22 Mar 96

[By Igor Zhukov]

[FBIS Transcribed Text] MOSCOW, March 22 (ITAR-TASS) - The State Duma has issued an address to the Russian Army, saying that its recent resolution reversing the 1991 parliamentary ratification of the Belovezh agreement is an act of justice.

"The decisions of the State Duma do not in the least way encroach on sovereignty of CIS state members, on volunteer, phased character of their mutual rapprochement. They (decisions) are an act of justice. They have been supported by the people, but rejected by those who is called to be guided by them," the address says.

The address to "generals, officers and servicemen in all troops" was signed by the communist faction's leaders Gennadiy Zyuganov and Sergey Baburin, Liberal Democratic Party leader Vladimir Zhirinovskiy, and by Svetlana Goryacheva, Viktor Ilyukhin and other figures of hardline opposition.

The Duma called on the Army to be vigilant and cool in the face of possible provocations.

"Stay within law and allegiance to your people," the parliamentary address says.

Russia: Speaker Says Duma Favors Integration With Republics

LD2303003596 Moscow INTERFAX in English 1908 GMT 22 Mar 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] MOSCOW, March 22 (INTERFAX) — The speaker of the State Duma, Russia's lower house of parliament, said on Friday the house would give the green light to accords to promote Russia's integration with Kazakhstan and other former Soviet republics if such were signed by President Boris Yeltsin and the leaders of those states.

Gennadiy Seleznev told Russia's NTV independent television channel he doubted any such agreements would become a reality in the near future, but promised that if they did the Duma would take no more than two weeks to ratify them.

He said he disagreed that March 15 resolutions by the Duma rejecting 1991 accords which dissolved the Soviet Union could be interpreted as "effective denunciation" of the agreements, for the resolutions "do not have the force of law."

He expressed indignation at the line taken by the "presidential entourage," which uses "double standards" in assessing the resolutions. He accused the presidential team of ignoring some of the Duma's earlier resolutions, including a demand for stopping the war in Chechnya.

As for warnings that the March 15 resolutions will stimulate NATO's eastward expansion, Seleznev called them "political blackmail."

He said he could not exclude the possibility that the Duma would reconsider the resolutions, change them into a law and submit it for endorsement to the Federation Council (upper house) and president.

He confirmed reports that the Duma is currently working on a law on the transfer of authority and argued it was essential to consider the draft before June's presidential election to avert "upheavals" if Yeltsin had to step down.

Russia: Duma Appeals for Economic Sanctions Against Estonia

LD2203212496 Moscow ITAR-TASS World Service in Russian 1713 GMT 22 Mar 96

[By ITAR-TASS parliamentary correspondent Pavel Kuznetsov]

[FBIS Translated Text] Moscow, 22 March (ITAR-TASS) — The State Duma today adopted an appeal to the Russian president "over the violation of the basic rights and liberties of Russian Federation citizens and Russian compatriots in the Estonian Republic." In their appeal, the deputies ask the head of state to reach a decision on introducing economic sanctions against Estonia. The parliamentarians say their request stems from the fact that the main problem in Russian-Estonian relations is still the Estonian authorities' policy of discrimination against the non-Estonian population and the "gentle" squeezing out of Estonia of people whose native tongue is Russian. The Duma also adopted a statement over the violation of the rights of Orthodox believers in Estonia.

In addition, the Duma today called on the Latvian president to release Alfreds Rubiks, the former USSR people's deputy, from detention. In the view of the deputies he was convicted on the basis of a law that had been given retroactive force.

The Duma also called on the Lithuanian Seimas to amnesty the elderly Lithuanian politicians and public figures, against whom criminal prosecutions were instituted at the start of the 1990's.

Russia: Chairman Announces Duma Recess Until 3 Apr

LD2203210496 Moscow INTERFAX in English 1908 GMT 22 Mar 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] MOSCOW, March 22 (INTERFAX) — The Russian State Duma announced a monthly break in its activity as stipulated in procedural regulations for meetings between deputies and their voters.

The parliament's lower chamber will hold its next plenary session on April 3, State Duma Chairman Gennadiy Seleznev said at the session.

Regional Affairs

Russia: Sitting President Only Candidate in Tatar Election

LD2403004296 Moscow Radio Rossii Network in Russian 2000 GMT 23 Mar 96

[FBIS Translated Text] The presidential election is to be held in Tatarstan on Sunday [24 March]. The only candidate for the post is the present president Mintimer Shaymiyev.

In a conversation with a RIA news agency correspondent he expressed his regret that there was only one candidate. The fact is that two candidates did not manage to collect the necessary number of signatures in their support, and the candidate for the republican Communist party was withdrawn by the party, which was afraid of a crushing defeat at the elections, Shaymiyev said.

Marat Syrayev, chairman of the republic's central electoral commission, is convinced that the present president will be elected for a second term by a majority of votes.

Russia: Re-elected Tatar President Supports Yeltsin

LD2403213196 Moscow Russian Television Network in Russian 2000 GMT 24 Mar 96

[From the "Vesti" newscast]

[FBIS Translated Excerpt] Today politicians in Moscow, unlike those in Minsk, were apathetic about yesterday's events concerning Russia's and Belarus' future. The main event in Russian political life was the presidential election in Tatarstan.

By 1700, 62 percent of the entire electorate had cast their votes. The most brisk were the elections in the countryside. [passage omitted]

Citizens of the Republic's capital were unusually active, with 56 percent of the electorate in Kazan having cast their votes by 1700. Whereas Naberezhnaya Chelnyy's citizens were not in a hurry to cast their votes, with slightly over 40 percent of the voters having cast their votes. [passage omitted]

[Begin recording] [Unidentified correspondent] What kind of changes, if any, should be expected in your team after the elections?

[Tatar President Mintimer Shaymiyev] Life is going on. There might be slight changes, but there will not be any radical changes. We are gradually stabilizing the economy and this is done by the current government.

[Correspondent] Who would you like to see as the president of Russia?

[Shaymiyev] As I said, Yeltsin, without the war in Chechnya. My stance remains unchanged. I have spoken about this repeatedly. It will not be easy for Boris Nikolayevich, but he must solve the conflict in Chechnya. [end recording]

By 2100 local time the polling stations in Kazan were closed and according to our correspondent about 80 percent of the electorate had taken part in the elections.

Russia: Tatar Presidential Elections Deemed Valid

LD2403175796 Moscow INTERFAX in English 1724 GMT 24 Mar 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] KAZAN, March 24 (INTERFAX-EURASIA) — Presidential elections in the Republic of Tatarstan (a constituent republic in the Russian Federation) can be considered valid as about 60 percent of the voters had come to the polling stations by 4:00 p.m. Sunday (the required minimum is 50 percent).

By that hour, 50.1 percent of the voters in Kazan had cast their votes; about 40 percent in other cities and 78.2 percent in the rural regions.

Sociologists predicted earlier, that the turn-out would stand at 75-78 percent on the election day.

Tatarstan's current President Mintimer Shaymiyev was the only candidate entered on the ballot papers.

Shaymiyev told Interfax Sunday that he would have voted for an alternative candidate if such a candidate had been available and if he had proposed a real and serious program. He also said that he had prepared himself for a struggle and expressed regret that no force could provide arguments that it would run the republic better than himself. If elected, Shaymiyev will continue to implement the reform "but without any radical steps". "We can no longer risk our luck. We know what should be done and how, and we must create conditions for our work," he said. He said the results of presidential elections in Russia on June 16 were one of such conditions.

The presidential elections in Tatarstan were a testing ground for the state automated system "Elections". Chairman of the Central Electoral Commission Marat Sirayev told Interfax that the results of using it in Tatarstan and other regions of Russia will be analyzed to decide whether it should be used during the presidential elections in Russia in the summer of 1996.

Russia: Nizhniy Novgorod Lawmakers Vote To Extend Their Terms

MK2303080196 Moscow KOMMERSANT-DAILY in Russian 22 Mar 96 p 3

[Report by Andrey Chugunov: "Nizhniy Novgorod Lawmakers Double Their Term of Office"]

[FBIS Translated Text] Deputies of the Nizhniy Novgorod Oblast Legislative Assembly could not resist the temptation of extending their term of office. They nobly drew the line at two additional years even if a recent presidential edict that permitted them to set the date of the next elections did not specify any time limit. The next elections, the deputies have decided, should be in March 1998.

Interestingly, the Novgorod Oblast Legislative Assembly said a resolute "no" to the recommendation in the Boris Yeltsin's well-known edict to move the date of elections for new people's choices of the oblast level to December 1997, and almost unanimously moved that the elections be held simultaneously with the presidential elections. The motive at that time was as follows: we were elected for two years, and we cannot extend the term without the voters' consent. Much must have changed over the winter, if 30 of the 39 deputies attending the session (their total number is 45) voted "for," with two abstentions and only seven against. Those present during the discussion of this question at first had the impression that the term would not be extended — so stormy was the debate. Proposals ran the gamut between the extreme (to hold the elections and not to hold the elections) and compromise: There was a proposal to elect half the Legislative Assembly on rotation. Some suggested that the number of deputies be increased to 60 in order "to guarantee continuity in the work of deputies."

Yet, a week before their term was up, the Nizhniy Novgorod lawmakers extended their powers for a second term never asking what their voters think. State Duma deputy Aleksandr Maltsev (a Socialist backed by Communists) described this "new departure" from the democratic process as "usurping the representative power" which contravenes the Constitution. It is, however, quite possible that Nizhniy Novgorod people will still get to elect new deputies before March of 1998, because whoever wins the presidential elections will be able to invalidate the current president's edict in the same manner that he [the current president] invalidated the two-year term for deputies in the provinces.

Russia: Gorbachev Announces Presidential Plans in St Petersburg

LD2203151396 Moscow ITAR-TASS in English 1418 GMT 22 Mar 96

[By Nataliya Cherepanova]

[FBIS Transcribed Text] ST. PETERSBURG, March 22 (ITAR-TASS) — Former Soviet president Mikhail Gorbachev, visiting St. Petersburg, on Thursday announced his entering the race for presidency.

He planned to visit the city's Kirovskiy, Steel and Baltiiskiy works, and LOMO (Leningrad Optical Mechanical Association), but none of the four industrial giants has offered welcome.

"The leadership of these enterprises is most likely to belong to the Yeltsin team," Gorbachev explained.

Nonetheless, the parent of the excruciating antialcohol campaign of the early perestroyka years did have a meeting with the personnel of the Polyustrovo company, a producer of the mineral water.

Gorbachev said in his address that he sees as unacceptable "both the regime of Yeltsin and revanchism of Zyuganov," and would do everything he can to fail their coming in presidential office. He spelled the everything as his possible preelection alliance with Grigoriy Yavlinskiy, Svyatoslav Fedorov and Aleksandr Lebed. [sentence as received]

Gorbachev will travel on Saturday to Ivangorod, a town on the Russian-Estonian border, to visit a cross-border corridor. He is to return to Moscow later on Saturday.

Russia: Commander's 'Great Satisfaction' at Northern Fleet Exercise

MM2503120196 Moscow Russian Television Network in Russian 1100 GMT 24 Mar 96

[From the "Vesti" newscast: Video report on Northern Fleet exercises by G. Smirnova, identified by caption; figures in brackets denote broadcast time in GMT in hours, minutes, and seconds]

[FBIS Translated Text] [111100] [G. Smirnova over mid-distance shot of Admiral Kuznetsov] A group of ships headed by the aircraft carrier Admiral Flota Sovetskogo Soyuza Kuznetsov has returned from a long voyage. For several months the Northern Fleet ships were on alert duty in the Mediterranean. During the final stage of the cruise the flagship of the Russian Navy took part in Northern Fleet command staff exercises, the biggest such exercises in recent years, held under the leadership of Admiral Oleg Yerofeyev.

The exercises made it possible to verify the actual combat readiness of the main forces of the Navy. Taking part in the exercises were around 500 submarines and surface ships and also air defense forces. The aircraft-carrying multirole group headed by the cruiser Admiral Kuznetsov successfully repulsed an attack by missile-carrying naval aircraft. Precision launchings were carried out from a nuclear submarine. Northern Fleet personnel implemented hundreds of combat tasks with precision and great skill and detected three foreign submarines near Russian shores and expelled them from the exercise area.

[O. Yerofeyev, commander of the Northern Fleet, identified by caption] We have not conducted Northern Fleet exercises on this scale for a long time. Ship crews acquired a great deal of practical experience at sea, pilots learned good flying skills. The exercises which we have held have left me with a great feeling of satisfaction. [111220] [video shows Admiral Kuznetsov in middle distance, missile firings. Yerofeyev interview]

Russia: Far East Command Staff Exercise Held

MM2503092396 Moscow KRASNAYA ZVEZDA in Russian 22 Mar 96 p 2

[Report by Valeriy Usoltsev: "Exercise for Far East Servicemen"]

[FBIS Translated Text] Khabarovsk — A command staff exercise is being held in the Far East under the overall leadership of Colonel General Viktor Chechevatov, commander of the Far East Military District. Questions of collaboration and control of the units deployed in the region are being rehearsed, the professional training of generals and officers is being improved, and other questions are being resolved.

Russia: Yekaterinburg Missile Designer Killers 'Linked to Arms Exports'

MM2203134496 Moscow KOMSOMOLSKAYA PRAVDA in Russian 22-29 Mar 96 p 2

[Report by Sergey Avdeyev: "Shield of the Motherland Failed To Save Designer From Bullet"]

[FBIS Translated Excerpt] Yekaterinburg — Another man has been killed in Yekaterinburg. In a stupidly and banal way, at the entrance to his own home, by a single shot to the head. And what a brilliant head it was....

Valentin Alekseyevich Smirnov had worked for many years in the country's defense complex, developing artificial-intelligence antimissile systems. He was the chief designer at the M.I. Kalinin Machine-Building Plant, where the most sophisticated missiles of recent decades — the motherland's famous shield — were produced. Recently Doctor of Technical Sciences Professor Valentin Smirnov had been head of the "Novator" Experimental Design Bureau. Who could have been bothered by this intelligent and highly educated man? But in our criminalized country anyone doing his job could find himself in the wrong. [passage omitted]

Without claiming to have made a discovery, I would nonetheless suggest that the order to kill a man of such standing could have come from circles closely linked to arms exports. In that event it is easier to understand why the life of an honest, 62-year-old scientist, a corresponding member of the Russian Academy of Sciences, and a Lenin and State Prize winner could have been a problem. After all, when the "Novator" Experimental Design Bureau was hived off from the M.I. Kalinin Plant, Smirnov had become the head of an independent structure fully capable of implementing its own developments and selling them abroad. I understand that "Novator" did have plans of this sort.

By the end of the second day following the tragedy Yekaterinburg's investigators had not yet issued any statement, apart from a standard statement of regret. The search for the criminals continues.

Russia: Novosibirsk Subway Guard Reinforcement Due To Chechen Threats

LD2303180696 Moscow NTV in Russian 1600 GMT 23 Mar 96

[From the "Segodnya" newscast]

[FBIS Translated Text] According to RIA information, the Novosibirsk subway was placed under reinforced guard today in connection with the threat by Dudayev's fighters that they will carry out a series of terrorist act here as retribution for the death of Salman Raduyev. The fighters think that a staff member of the Novosibirsk special-purpose militia detachment was responsible the death of one of Dudayev's main comrades-in-arms.

Russia: Food From Asian Countries Spoils in Maritime Kray

MM2203133096 Moscow KRASNAYA ZVEZDA in Russian 22 Mar 96 p 1

[Report by Nikolay Litovets: "Disaster Again. Manmade This Time"]

[FBIS Translated Text] Vladivostok —It looks as though a new "natural disaster," but this time one created by the hands of a number of foreign firms with the tactic consent of our government, has descended on Maritime Kray. It arose as a result of the import to Maritime Kray from India, Indonesia, and Vietnam of food worth 45 billion rubles with a view to eliminating the consequences of the natural disasters of previous years — to extinguish debts for state credits granted by the former USSR to these countries.

The delivery of fruit to the kray is being carried out irregularly with violations of all deadlines and season and the fruit lies in ships' holds in piles, with an untold quantity of food being spoilt and without the accompanying documentation. Over 3,000 tonnes of this freight has now accumulated at customs depots and 400 tonnes consisting of juice and canned vegetables and fruit is totally unsaleable because of breakages, leaks, and the absence of a sell-by date. So the "free" goods so necessary to the Maritime Kray people have become a real disaster because of numerous cases of lack of coordination.

Economic Issues

Russia: Livshits Says Return to Socialist Economics 'Impossible'

LD2403193096 Moscow INTERFAX in English 1707 GMT 24 Mar 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] MOSCOW, March 24 (INTERFAX) - An aide to President Boris Yeltsin has argued that if the Communists took power in Russia going back to the former "socialist model" of economics would nevertheless be impossible.

Such a reversal would mean bad times for the country's economy, economics aide Aleksandr Livshits told the Interfax- AiF [Argumenty i Fakty] weekly in an interview due to appear on Monday [25 March].

Citing figures which had never been published before, he said that until this year foreign businesses had been ready to buy several billion dollars' worth of shares in Russia's privatized enterprises but what foreign firms had been willing to buy during the first half of this year - until mid-June - was worth only about $350,000.

He said the left-wing opposition insisted that Russia needed to throw off the "yoke" of the International Monetary Fund (IMF). But this would not only deprive the country of $4 billion the IMF is to provide this year alone. It would inevitably entail Russia's breakup with the Paris Club, an association bringing together Western countries which have lent money to Russia. It would also induce nonresident firms to pull out of Russia's treasury bill market and would bring about a ban on the sale of Russian bonds in Europe. A splitup with the IMF would cost Russia between $22 billion and $24 billion this year alone, Livshits said.

Russia: Central Bank Issues Statement on New $100 Bills

MM2503095896 Moscow ROSSIYSKAYA GAZETA in Russian 23 Mar 96 p 1

[Statement by the Central Bank of the Russian Federation (Bank of Russia): "Not Worth Worrying"]

[FBIS Translated Text] The U.S. Government and Federal Reserve have announced the introduction as of 25 March 1996 of new $100 bills. This is due to a need to step up safeguards against forgeries.

The United States is not aiming to replace its bills. The new bills will circulate alongside old bills. The old bills will continue to be U.S. legal tender for an unlimited period and will be withdrawn from circulation as they wear out.

The main task, the statement says, is to ensure the implementation on an equal basis on Russian territory of legitimate operations to buy and sell both old-style and new-style $100 bills for rubles.

The new $100 bills will start entering Russia in a few days' time after their official introduction.

U.S. currency worth $50-55 million is currently brought into Russia every day. According to information from the American side, U.S. commercial banks supplying cash to Russian banks intend to increase their lines of credit to their Russian partners by 50-100 percent. Thus, in the initial period of the introduction of the new $100 bills the level of money coming into the country every day could increase to $100-110 million.

A number of Russian commercial banks are opening so-called bank note deposits for the population to provide a convenient means of obtaining the new-style $100 bills. Considering this initiative useful, the Bank of Russia draws Russian citizens' attention to the fact that when selecting a bank where they are to deposit money in a bank note deposit account, people should be swayed by its reliability, not by promises of high interest.

The Bank of Russia issues a reminder that operations to exchange foreign currency at unregistered commercial bank exchange centers are illegal.

The Bank of Russia calls on Russian citizens not to attempt to exchange their savings into new-style dollar bills in the first few days after their introduction. This will result in nothing but unjustifiable speculation, financial loss, and moral damage for the holders of the foreign exchange. The country's existing infrastructure for the importation of foreign currency and the system of exchange centers has been fully developed and organized to ensure the relatively wide dissemination on Russian territory of 1996-style $100 bills within the next three-four months.

[Signed] S.K. Dubinin, chairman of the Bank of Russia
[Dated] 21 March 1996

Russia: Energy Minister Shafranik on Problems, Aims

MM2503102696 Moscow KRASNAYA ZVEZDA in Russian 20 Mar 96 pp 1,2

[Interview with Russian Federation Minister for Fuel and Energy Yuriy Shafranik by Vladimir Berezko; date, place not given: "Yuriy Shafranik: The Army Is Not To Blame for the Fact That It Has No Money"]

[FBIS Translated Text]

From the KRASNAYA ZVEZDA File

Shafranik, Yuriy Konstantinovich. Born in 1952 in the village of Karasul in Ishimskiy Rayon, Tyumen Oblast. Graduated from the Tyumen Industrial Institute in 1974. In 1990-1991 he was chairman of the Tyumen Oblast Soviet of People's Deputies. In 1991 he became head of Tyumen Oblast Administration. In January 1993 he was appointed Russian Federation minister for fuel and energy.

He is married. He has a son and a daughter.

[Berezko] Yuriy Konstantinovich, some people think that given our abundance of oil and gas, you could trade in them more advantageously. What do you think about this?

[Shafranik] The oil and gas industries and even the miners today have such heavy taxes imposed on them that they receive about $3 or a maximum of $4 per tonne from exports. This puts the energy complex in an extremely difficult position. At the same time, currency from exports has for the second or third year in succession literally been rescuing the country by putting money into the budget. Income into the budget from our exports has been growing every year since 1993. This and this alone is enabling us to maintain a favorable balance in foreign trade, maintain budget payments, and survive in general. I would particularly like to mention the people working in our industry: They drill, they extract oil and gas, but they sometimes do not receive their wages for three or four months at a time.

Furthermore. In order to make exporting advantageous, it is necessary to reduce the taxation "burden" on the producer. Meanwhile in November-December 1995 the profit from exporting was practically zero.

But it cannot be said that everything is bad here. The USSR exported over 100 million tonnes of oil a year. Then, in 1991, the volume fell by nearly 50 percent. Now we have practically restored exports — they come to 98 million tonnes a year. It is important not to change the procedure for exports every year and to determine that only the producer can export, although he has the possibility to cede his right to export.

[Berezko] In that event what is the state's role?

[Shafranik] Let us start off with the fact that trading in gas is a monopoly in our country. Via "Gazprom" and other organs — of currency regulation, for example — exports are controlled fairly rigidly, and the results are already noticeable: In the past few years we have managed to raise the price of supplies of gas to Western Europe, the former socialist countries, and the Commonwealth states. Correspondingly, we have received more currency.

[Berezko] So we are capable of beating off competition? Competition is an integral part of the market, after all.

[Shafranik] Competition has always been tough and it always will be. There are no exceptions for Russia. We must clearly understand this and firmly protect the interests of our producers, even if they have made some mistakes. Their image must be protected and they must be helped in every way. We are collaborating closely with the Foreign Ministry and the Ministry of Foreign Economic Relations in this sphere. Because we come up against competition even in fraternal countries, for instance in Slovakia. Oil is being exported there from Russia, and the local oil refinery is accordingly refining it. But they do not want to let us into the market. At the airport the storage tanks are already labeled "British Petroleum."

How can they do that if the oil is ours? And this is despite the fact that state agreements have been concluded between our countries.

That is why, I repeat, we need to support Russian companies in every way. The Ministry of Fuel and Energy has elaborated its own doctrine on this subject, which has been presented for ratification by the Russian Federation Security Council.

We have reestablished all our economic ties which were lost following the collapse of the USSR. For example, in Vietnam we are currently extracting more oil than we did in the past. We intend to work actively in Iraq once the embargo is removed, and some of the agreements have already been signed. We plan to work in Iran, and we also consider that Libya could be within the bounds of the interests of our fuel complex.

On behalf of the Russian Federation Government I was in Egypt for the celebration of the 25th anniversary of the Aswan Dam, which in the minds of the local inhabitants is comparable in scale only with the famous pyramids. In Egypt there is an excellent base for the development of our economic relations in this region. The state's interests coincide with the interests of Russian companies, since profit from their work goes into the state budget in the form of taxes. Consequently, the state should help defend their interests.

We are currently aiming to enter new markets and obtain resources. For instance, there is an interesting market in Ukraine — gas stations, depots, and so on. Azerbaijan has the resources of the Caspian. We cannot wait until the problem of its status is resolved. We must obtain a share in projects, because once a certain period of time has elapsed it will be too late.

In a word, entering a market is a tough but normal process. And we must talk about this openly: Either the Russian companies will win, or they will lose. There is no third way in the struggle of competition.

[Berezko] Yuriy Konstantinovich, the problem of unpaid bills is the scourge of the whole economy, including of course the fuel and energy complex. The Army is particularly frequently criticized for not paying bills. But are the garrisons really to blame for the fact that they have no money to pay for energy sources?

[Shafranik] This is a very difficult question. It is true that the fuel and energy complex is not detached from this, and indeed it cannot be, for the simple reason that you cannot survive for two hours at the moment without heat and power. We are simply obliged to supply coal, petroleum, gas, and electricity to our consumers. Consequently, the problem of unpaid bills hits us with full force, so to speak. This restrains the development of production and contributes to the inflation of prices. We are trying to solve the problem ourselves — by the mutual settlement of accounts, using bonds, and so on.

As for the garrisons.... Of course the Army is not to blame for the fact that it has no money. We have always believed that there should be a normal state order for the needs of the country's defense, that is, settlements should be at state level, as this should not be the Army's headache. One or two specific companies would be personally responsible for the implementation of the state budget, and I am 100 percent convinced that nothing would go wrong. We just need an entry in the budget on the basis of which it would be possible to take out a bank credit. And the question of the state order must be settled immediately.

[Berezko] The fuel and energy complex is a sector with defense significance. This is clear even to people who have nothing to do with the Army. Is your department participating in conversion?

[Shafranik] Conversion for the sake of it is no use to anyone. Conversion should be geared to a specific customer. We want to be in the position of customer here, because the fuel and energy complex is a capital intensive industry. In the past four years we have halved imports of equipment, elaborating our own programs and pointing defense plants and our own plants toward producing the articles which we used to import. The ministry has an administration which resolves conversion issues, and the "Tyumenskaya Yarmarka" joint-stock company has been set up, which has devoted several fairs to conversion. The Yurginskiy Izhneftemash plant is operating extremely well. Thanks to our orders, in Kurgan the number of workers at the plant which used to make locking devices for submarines has been maintained and even increased. Tyumen plants which earlier used to work completely for the defense industry are now working for the fuel and energy complex. The fuel and energy complex projects are helping to develop the entire production chain. The more extensively production in the fuel and energy complex develops — the more conversion orders there will be.

[Berezko] Yuriy Konstantinovich, does the orientation toward exports not mean that the country is gradually being turned into the raw materials appendage of the developed countries?

[Shafranik] The fact that we are developing exports of oil is not bad in itself. What is bad is that we cannot use the currency that has been earned from exporting to create high-technology production units, whose output would be capable of beating off competition on the external market. All resources are going into the budget, there are no investment funds, and as a results exports just get eaten up. In this way, irreversible damage is being done, and our country could indeed turn into a raw materials appendage.

[Berezko] What are the prospects of the development of your department's relations with oil companies?

[Shafranik] Difficult, like everything in our country. We have embarked on the path of creating independent economic components. At the same time the state, even if it has 1 percent of an enterprise's shares, must have a direct influence on its activity — through shares, and indirectly through tax, price, and other legislation. An accusation sometimes made against us is that the ministry is losing its influence. As chief it is not particularly pleasant to hear this, but as someone who is deliberately creating a different system of management, it's fine. We are forming companies which will fight for resources and open up new markets. And they must be free. As for running them, this is no problem, we just have to learn properly how to run things by not administrative but economic levers — taxes, prices, and so forth. During the transitional period it is extremely important to have a firm influence on the activity of companies via the state block of shares.

Economic policy has been determined in the fuel and energy complex for at least the next 15 years. We are aspiring to put into effect the principle of the priority of the producers — the people who extract coal, gas, and oil.

The energy strategy has been ratified by an edict of the Russian Federation president, and the "Fuel and Energy" program has been adopted by a Russian Federation Government decree. So we will have coal, gas, and petroleum.

Russia: Foreign, Russian Oil Companies Displeased With IMF

MK2303131596 Moscow NEZAVISIMAYA GAZETA in Russian 22 Mar 96 p 1

[Report by Rustam Narzikulov: "U.S. Investors Are Displeased With the International Monetary Fund. Russian Companies Fully Agree With the Americans, but Are Keeping Silent"]

[FBIS Translated Text] Four U.S. and one British oil company have raised their voices in support of the current Russian tax system. In the view of officials from the Underman Smith, British Gas, Conoco, Global Natural, and Fibro Energy companies, the desire of the International Monetary Fund [IMF] to raise taxes on the production and transportation of Russian oil "is destabilizing present and future investments in the Russian oil sector and will undermine those economic achievements" which the IMF is striving to attain.

The foreign investors expressed their position in a letter to Yusuke Horiguchi [name as transliterated], deputy director of the IMF's Second European Department. NEZAVISIMAYA GAZETA has a copy of this letter.

Foreign investors' concern about the harshening of the fiscal regime in Russia has been caused by the fact that over the past few years the above companies have invested over $800 million in the Russian oil industry on condition that 100 percent of their products would be exported and that they would be exempt from export duties.

It will be recalled that a month ago the IMF granted a credit of $10.2 billion to the Russian Government, imposing a condition that the oil export duty (20 ECU's) should be abolished. The IMF's condition regarding the abolition of the export duty implied the need to find an equivalent replacement, otherwise a breach of several billion dollars could have been formed in the country's budget, which would have rendered receipt of the IMF's credit senseless.

The Russian Federation Finance Ministry has already prepared a project to introduce on 1 April a new excise tax on the production of oil (55,000 rubles per tonne) and a tax on its transportation (54,000 rubles per tonne), as well as a reduction in export duty from 20 to 10 ECU's. In the opinion of foreign investors, the new taxes will deprive their companies (meaning joint ventures set up in Russia [author's comment]) of profit and "will lead eventually to their complete crash." "The economic position of our enterprises simply will not stand a rise in taxes on gross receipts, standing presently at 52 percent (30 percent as tax on gross receipts and 22 percent as charges for transportation), which we are already paying now," the investors say, appealing to the reason of the International Monetary Fund and of Mr. Horiguchi personally.

The companies believe that the consequences of a new fiscal regime will be much more far-reaching than the mere "closure of our enterprises," since "this will also have a wide response in the international banking, insurance, and investment community." In other words, the IMF will become ill-famed as the butcher of the Russian economy.

With all the services of foreign investors to the development of the Russian oil industry, the future of their enterprises by itself will not have any major effect on the country's economy. The letter from the Underman Smith, British Gas, Conoco, Global Natural, and Fibro Energy companies is of interest for another reason: Professional Western managers have learned from their own experience that no advanced technology and organization of production will save the Russian oil business (accounting for the largest share of the country's gross domestic product) from losses at the present level of taxation.

Leaders of major Russian companies are fully aware of this fact too. After all, it is they, rather than the 40 joint ventures with the participation of foreign capital, who are going to suffer most from the introduction of new excise and transport taxes.

Strangely enough, however, it is foreigners, rather than "LUKoil," "YUKOS," or "Surgutneftegaz," who are trying to protest against the strangling of the Russian oil sector. The public activity of domestic oil generals has thus far been directed either to the writing of letters in support of the present president, or to making commitments to supply fuel for the sowing campaign on a gratis basis.

Meanwhile, workers at large Russian companies feel very worried. Calculations show that new taxes will cost the oil industry 14 trillion rubles, or nearly $3 billion. Russian companies are unable to raise domestic prices endlessly so as to offset tax-incurred losses. Even if they do manage to raise the oil price to 430,000-440,000 rubles per tonne (80-85 percent of the world price), this is sure to cause a decline in raw oil production and, as a result, to cut tens of thousands of jobs. In companies' head offices people are talking openly about an imminent riot of workers at oil enterprises in Tyumen Oblast.

It cannot be ruled out that U.S. and British companies will manage to come to an agreement with Michel Camdessus and Yusuke Horiguchi, and their joint ventures will be able to avoid bankruptcy in exporting Russian oil. There is little doubt, however, that Russian companies are doomed to vegetative life. The oil and gas sector is the last major donor for the state, and the authorities will not give up hope of resolving budgetary problems with its help.

International Affairs

Ukraine: Kuchma Addresses Geneva Forum

LD2403144596 Kiev Radio Ukraine World Service in Ukrainian 1100 GMT 24 Mar 96

[Speech by President Leonid Kuchma entitled "A democratic Ukraine in the current European context," delivered at Geneva conference center on 21 March — recorded]

[FBIS Translated Excerpt] [Passage omitted]

The processes taking place in Europe and the world since the fall of the Berlin wall prove the obvious fact that there are tens of millions of Europeans living east of the Brandenburg Gate who until recently were isolated from their natural civilized environment. Compared to other countries in central and eastern Europe, Ukraine's unique feature is that, while being open to integration into Europe, it is forced to overcome a double [supplying dropped word in initial FBIS version] division of the continent created after World War II. The first one is the ever dwindling western border of the Warsaw Pact countries, and the second one is the western border of the former Soviet Union, which is still sometimes perceived as the border of the CIS, artificially separating Ukraine from its neighbors in eastern and central Europe.

While overcoming political barriers, which are inevitably linked to economic reforms, Ukraine is gradually, step by step, integrating into the common European area of stability, security, democracy and well-being. I should mention that we have to carry out this task on the move, so to speak, at the same time building the foundations of the state and radically reforming the established way of life in the economy, politics and the humanitarian sphere.

Our country's admission to the Council of Europe was an event of extreme significance. It presented fundamentally new opportunities for the strengthening of democracy in Ukraine and the application of other European countries' experience in nation-building in a country which is powerful but not particularly experienced by modern standards. In its turn, the European community can learn something from the deep-rooted democratic traditions of the Ukrainian people, as well as appreciate our contemporary achievements in the democratic resolution of problems concerning state development.

These include the constitutional treaty, a unique act which provided a civilized way out of a political crisis which, current practice shows, is inevitable for a country in transition, and laid a foundation for the new Ukrainian constitution. We believe that its adoption will have a fundamental effect on the country's further integration into the European community. I would like to take advantage of this opportunity and tell you that a draft of the new constitution was submitted to parliament yesterday. It incorporates the achievements of European and world legal science and practice.

Also important is the fact that it is based on our own experience in nation-building, an experience that is both historical and contemporary. Therefore, we feel that the slight delay with the adoption of a new constitution will turn to our advantage, resulting in a stable fundamental document of the state.

As a significant part of central and eastern Europe, Ukraine regards the deepening of European integration as one of its foreign policy priorities, wishing as it does to occupy a worthy place in its geopolitical environment and promote democratization and Europeanization. A neutral, nonaligned Ukraine strives to develop the strength to fulfill its proper role within international organizations, on the basis of its geopolitical significance, industrial, intellectual and cultural potential. Ukraine has turned its formal presence on behalf of the former Soviet Union into an active position of a country wishing both to diversify its foreign relations and improve the efficiency of international cooperation on the whole.

The centrifugal trends in the east and the integrational movement in the west of Europe have not left Ukraine unaffected, as it sees its future in the context of general civilized trends and influences. Given the dialectical unity of Ukraine's economic and political interests, where genuine steps forward have been made, we can speak of a well-defined trend toward the expansion and development of integration into European structures. We believe that it can be based on both existing and future associations of European countries.

Ukraine's strategy lies in approaching the common European structures in two parallel ways, directly and through membership in central European institutions. It is worth stressing that one sometimes overlooks Ukraine's particular geographic position, the fact that it is located in eastern, central and southern Europe, and therefore stands for active ties between international organizations involving countries of the Black Sea and the Mediterranean region.

Ukraine's integration with Europe by no means implies any dangerous move toward severing relations with Russia. We are talking about natural and vitally necessary, mutually complementary foreign links. Together with other European countries, Ukraine has an interest in democratic developments in Russia, its largest and most influential neighbor and partner. We support President Boris Yeltsin's course toward in-depth democratic and socioeconomic reforms in this great country. We are forced to attach particular importance to this after the recent decision of the Russian State Duma. Attempts to question the Belovezhskaya Pushcha accords are regarded in Ukraine as a serious threat of destabilization not only in the post-Soviet territory, but in that of Europe. Although this move by the Russian Duma has no legal force, it nevertheless may have a negative effect on the future development of Ukrainian- Russian relations.

The people of Ukraine made their unequivocal choice on 1 December 1991, voting almost unanimously for independence and their own state in a nationwide referendum. As the president of Ukraine, I declare that there is no going back to the Soviet Union. At the same time, I wish to repeat that we stand for the development and strengthening of integrational processes in the framework of the CIS, on the basis of mutual benefit and equality without any restrictions for its members. Ukraine regards this as an important mechanism in the new historical conditions to support equal and mutually beneficial cooperation among the independent states which emerged on the territory of the Soviet Union, both on bilateral and multilateral principles.

Ladies and gentlemen, conscious of its responsibility for international security, Ukraine voluntarily renounced nuclear arms and took an unprecedented step within a short space of time to cut down its armed forces. It is taking active part in UN peacekeeping operations. Our country's considerable and concrete contribution to the strengthening of world security is fully consistent with the trends which are gaining pace in Europe and will in many ways define the development of mankind at the turn of the millennium. We are convinced that the development of a new common European security architecture must embrace all interested countries in the Euroatlantic area. European security should rely on existing international structures and institutions, first of all the CSCE, the European Union, NATO, Western European Union, the Council of Europe, the North Atlantic Cooperation Council, and the Partnership for Peace program. Regional organizations such as the Nordic Council, the Baltic Sea Council and the Black Sea Economic Cooperation countries should also play an important role. It is perhaps the most topical task now to synchronize the (?efforts) of these institutions and adjust them to suit the requirements of building a postconfrontational world.

The problem of NATO's expansion attracts special attention within the context of all-European security. The expansion should take place for the sake of easing, not aggravating, the contradictions currently existing in Europe and the world over.

As a nonaligned country, Ukraine sees the threat to itself not in this or that military bloc but in a growing antagonism between them.

The stance of our state is well known and it can be set out as follows: Ukraine, as a matter of fact, does not reject the idea of the expansion of NATO as an organization that unites democratic states. Any state has the right to decide independently whether or not to join military-political structures, NATO included, and no one can veto this sovereign right. However, we believe that in implementing this decision it is necessary, under any circumstances, to abide by the principles of indivisibility, security, and avoidance of new demarcation lines in Europe.

In other words, the urgent national interests of all countries involved as regards their security should be properly ensured, and Ukraine is not an exception. On the contrary, Ukraine's place in Europe requires that its interests should be taken into account as far as possible. From the point of view of our state's interest, it is a matter of principle how soon and in what manner the issue is resolved. We regard NATO's possible expansion as a gradual and evolutionary process. Unfortunately, one cannot discard the fact that the ambitious political decision by the Russian Federation parliament to revoke the Belovezhskaya Pushcha agreements and reanimate the Soviet Union could naturally prompt NATO and Eastern and Central European states to change their strategy and tactics.

Being Europe's largest nonaligned country, Ukraine is aware of the fact that under current conditions its hypothetical accession to existing military-political blocs could destroy the international security system. However, it should not necessarily be a nonaligned country in the future.

Ukraine does not regard NATO as a threat to its security and is actively expanding cooperation with this influential organization within the framework of the Partnership for Peace program and the North Atlantic Cooperation Council. Establishment of special partnership relations between Ukraine and NATO could become the next step. Only on condition that the tendency toward democratization of social life in the former USSR countries is preserved, does it seem possible to transform the alliance into a Euro-Atlantic security structure, which would be based on a mutually acceptable idea of collective security of all European states without exception, instead of the collective defense concept.

Ukraine, which is immediately interested in both political and military issues of European security, is taking an active part in the work of the disarmament conference. Extremely important to our country, negotiations on concluding a treaty on a comprehensive ban on nuclear tests are being held within its framework. In view of the fact that Ukraine voluntary gave up the world's third largest nuclear potential, we believe it quite natural for Ukraine to be a full-fledged member of the disarmament conference.

Ladies and gentlemen: The key role of the European Union in the process of forming a single European space is well known. We understand that it would be too early today to talk about our membership in the union; however, this is our strategic aim. Meanwhile, creation of a free trade zone between the European Union and Ukraine is quite a realistic task. True, its implementation will largely depend on the progress of democratic transformations in our economy and society.

I would like to emphasize again that we shall never swerve from the road we have embarked on. The results of 1995 show that, despite all the problems, our objectives are realistic and transformations on the basis of market relations and democracy are irreversible.

We state with satisfaction that relations between Ukraine and the European Union are becoming ever more dynamic. A political dialogue is held on a regular basis, a provisional trade agreement has been put into effect, first sittings of the cooperation council have taken place, Ukraine's permanent mission at the European Union has been opened, and a committee for relations with the European Union has been set up in Ukraine. We are looking forward to the beginning of an intergovernmental conference of the European Union in Turin. We also hope that the agreement on partnership and cooperation, concluded between our state and the European Union, will be made effective as soon as possible.

Ukraine is actively stepping up economic cooperation through the UN European Economic Commission. In view of numerous problems of energy supply in Ukraine, cooperation with the commission in the field of power engineering acquires special importance.

Ukraine's membership in such an influential world structure as the World Trade Organization will contribute to its full-fledged participation in the worldwide economic space. We praise the experience of GATT-WTO in elaborating multilateral procedures for stimulating trade, foreign investments, and management of foreign debts. As a state with a transitional economy, Ukraine utterly requires technical and consultative assistance in this field.

I am convinced that in this hall there is no sense in proving the obvious thing: The implementation of economic reforms and the process of building a democratic, law-governed society are inseparable from the process of establishing human values in everyday life and securing inalienable human rights.

Taking into account all this and also the fact that our society is multiethnic and multiconfessional, we attach great significance to cooperation with the UN institutions and organizations that are engaged in solving humanitarian problems.

Conflicts taking place throughout the world force millions of people to seek refuge abroad. Ukraine, preserving internal stability, feels the repercussions of civil conflicts in the former USSR countries. Meanwhile, our state has found itself in need of solving the problems of repatriating and settling deported nations — Crimean Tatars and Germans in particular. These problems were brought about by totalitarianism. The scope of this work is a heavy burden for Ukraine, because it has actually been left face-to-face with it.

In our opinion, the elaboration and implementation of international programs reflecting the problems of repatriating Crimean Tatars and other deported nations would facilitate the situation. In connection with the opening of a mission of the UN High Commissioner for Refugees in Ukraine, we hope that the assistance on the part of the United Nations Organization will become more effective.

Ukraine cooperates with the Geneva department of humanitarian and socioeconomic affairs at the UN headquarters. A joint ecological section has been functioning within the framework of this department since 1994. The section deals with issues of the Chernobyl disaster. We count on its active participation in the events planned to mark the 10th anniversary of this largest technical and ecological catastrophe in the history of mankind. We invite other international organizations, whose headquarters are located in Geneva, to join the events. Chernobyl developed the feeling of international solidarity in the Ukrainian people. However, the consequences of that planetary disaster have not yet been eliminated and, in some cases, they have not been finally cleared up.

Ladies and gentlemen: Ukraine has managed to do quite a lot to balance and modernize its own external field [as heard], which is evolving rapidly enough from monopoly to polycentrism. Proceeding from its national interests, a foreign strategy has been worked out, which is integrated into the worldwide and European tendencies of developing and consolidating international security.

Therefore, I would like to emphasize in conclusion that the implementation of socioeconomic and political transformations in Ukraine in line with European standards already makes it possible to say unequivocally that the vector of our state's movement is pro-European and that it belongs not only to the past but also to the future of Europe.

I am convinced that independent, democratic, and economically thriving Ukraine will become a reliable basis for the European community and world democracy.

Ukraine: Kuchma Urges West To Support Country's Independent Status

WS2503102796 Kiev INTELNEWS in English 0625 GMT 24 Mar 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Kiev, March 23 — A Communist victory in the Russian elections will not interfere with Ukraine's independent status, according to President Leonid Kuchma.

"We are able to fight for our independence, and everything depends upon the success of our reforms in Ukraine," he said Friday, calling upon Western nations to support the nation's efforts toward independence.

"We continue to cooperate with the West," said Kuchma, adding, "The architecture of European safety should be based on the interaction of all European structures, including OSCE, NATO, the West-European Union and others."

As the largest non block country in Europe, Kuchma told VSEUKRAINSKIYE VEDOMOSTI that Ukraine will expand its cooperation with influential organizations such as the international program, "Partnership for the Sake of Peace," as well as the Union of North-Atlantic Cooperation.

"The next step", he added, "could be the establishment of a special partnership between Ukraine and NATO."

Ukraine: Report Outlines Marchuk, Chernomyrdin News Conference

AU2503123296 Kiev HOLOS UKRAYINY in Ukrainian 22 Mar 96 p 4

[Unattributed report: "The Premiers of Russia and Ukraine Know Solutions to All Bilateral Problems"]

[FBIS Translated Text] The prime ministers of Ukraine and Russia, Yevhen Marchuk and Viktor Chernomyrdin, stated that there are no such problems between the two countries that they wouldn't know how to proceed to resolving.

As reported by a correspondent of the INTERFAX-UKRAYINA Agency, at a news conference in Moscow dealing with the results of the first session of the mixed intergovernmental Ukrainian-Russian commission for trade and economic cooperation, the prime ministers, who headed the delegations of the two countries, expressed satisfaction with the results of its work. Ye. Marchuk stated that, in the course of the conference, they managed to "practically specify the list of those documents that must be ready prior to President Yeltsin's visit to Kiev" (the visit is scheduled for 4-5 April —INTERFAX-UKRAYINA). The prime minister pointed out that some documents have already been prepared in full.

In the course of the visit to Kiev by Russian President Boris Yeltsin, it is scheduled to sign, in addition to the general political treaty between the two countries, an accord on trade and economic cooperation, an accord on the Black Sea Fleet, an accord on cooperation in the sphere of nuclear power engineering, as well as a number of departmental accords, in particular, on interaction in the sphere of plant protection and on cooperation in the sphere of space research.

Having pointed out the great significance of the creation of the joint commission, Ye. Marchuk added that experts of the Ukrainian delegation had prepared a list of 25 questions that need to be settled. He put the complex of customs problems on the top of the list, because they create difficulties in the activity of entrepreneurs of both countries.

Ye. Marchuk told journalists that, during the work of the commission, new questions arose whose solution would promote an improvement of relations between the two countries. There already exist "three lists with more that 20 questions of this type," he said.

Answering the question about the problem of nuclear fuel deliveries from Russia to Ukraine in exchange for withdrawal of Ukrainian nuclear warheads to Russia, V. Chernomyrdin said that these issues were discussed in general in the context of Russian-Ukrainian cooperation in the sphere of nuclear power engineering. Ye. Marchuk said that the question of customs duty was discussed at the meeting.

Ukraine: Kiev, Moscow Agree on Tariff for Transit of Russian Oil

LD2303202596 Moscow INTERFAX in English 1803 GMT 23 Mar 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] KIEV, March 23 (Interfax - Ukraine) — The Russian Fuel and Energy Ministry has accepted Ukraine's terms regarding the tariff on Russian oil transit via Ukrainian territory, spokesman of the Ukrainian State Committee on Oil, Gas and Oil Processing Industries Stepan Yalovega told Interfax - Ukraine Saturday.

The Russian side announced its consent during a telephone conversation between the leadership of the Russian Fuel and Energy Ministry and the Ukrainian State Committee on Oil, Gas and Oil Processing Industries, he said. The agreement will be legalized later, the spokesman said.

The sides reached an early agreement that the tariff of $5.2 for transit of 1 tonne of Russian oil will be applied if between 16 million and 19 million tonnes of oil is annually transported by the Ukrainian section of the Druzhba oil pipeline.

The amount of Russian oil transportation by Ukraine's section of the Druzhba pipeline totalled 18 million tonnes in 1995.

If the coordinated amount of the oil transportation increases or decreases the tariff may be changed.

This tariff can also be modified with the mutual consent of the sides if the price of Russian energy supplies imported by Ukraine changes.

The sides agreed to hold to these terms during two years.

On January 1, 1996, Ukraine unilaterally raised the tariff on oil transit by the Druzhba oil pipeline to $5.2 per tonne. The Russian side has objected to the tariff hike. Russian and Ukrainian experts held talks in Kiev on March 19- 20 to find a compromise regarding this problem.

The Druzhba oil pipeline daily transports between 50,000 and 55,000 tonnes of Russian oil to the Czech Republic, Slovakia and Hungary under direct contracts between the Ukrainian state-run company for managing the Druzhba oil pipeline on Ukrainian territory and Russian oil suppliers. Russian oil transit to Hungary has been suspended because of the absence of "sufficient orders" from the Hungarian side.

Ukraine: Commentary Warns of Russian Communist Military Threat

AU2203154896 Kiev UKRAYINSKA HAZETA in Ukrainian 21 Mar 96 p 1

[Commentary by Lieutenant Colonel Vitaliy Chechylo, chairman of the board of the Center for Regional Studies "Eurasia" (Kiev): "A Coup Is Possible if the President Falls Asleep While on Duty...."]

[FBIS Translated Text] Gennadiy Zyuganov, leader of the Russian Communists, who has long been aspiring to assume a role as "father of nations," newly brought to light (at least within the CIS), may be pleased. The Union of Officers of the Former USSR was held in Moscow on 23-25 February 1996 according to his scenario. That congress of red-brown hawks was the catalyst for a rally of at least 50,000 on Lubyanka Square. In the estimates of independent analysts, such numbers of servicemen have not met there under red flags for six years.

Zyuganov's statement at the meeting about establishing close ties between Communists and servicemen further encouraged the sufficiently high-strung crowd. Some of the officers tore from their hats the cockades with the double-headed eagles, and flung them under their feet, to the cheering of the mob.

That Zyuganov does not talk idly, one could see both at the rally and at the congress. In particular, there was talk about free the dissemination within Russian (only?) units of communist and patriotic (more precisely, chauvinistic) publications. The pamphlets that were distributed in unlimited quantities at the rally, among all those who wanted to have them, openly called not only for showing insubordination to "Yeltsin's antipopular regime," but also for joining the ranks of the so-called "Union of Popular Resistance."

What kind of union it is, and what its goals are, were no secret at the congress. It was announced, not without glee, that under the leadership of the Officers' Union of the Russian Federation, clandestine officers' units are being created in Russian towns and in the towns of other CIS countries. They are being equipped with modern weapons and mobile communications to enable them, on D-day, to resist the official power bodies by force. An operations plan code-named "Great Purge-2" has already been worked out and adopted. It envisages arrests and the physical elimination of the activists of democratic parties, state officials, and representatives of big business. The names and addresses of such people are being entered into the computer, and they are being constantly looked for.

The congress also adopted a secret resolution on work within Ukraine's Armed Forces. Like-minded Ukrainian comrades are urged "not to interfere in the political struggle in the country, but consolidate ranks, create cells on the CPSU platform, and wait for the development of events in Russia."

According to some evidence, the most powerful branches of the Union of USSR Officers in Ukraine exist in placeswhere units of the 43d Rocket Army are deployed, in the Crimea, and also in Dnipropetrovsk, Odessa, Kharkiv, and Kiev.

Quite a number of speeches at the aforementioned congress expressed "brotherly" care about our glorious future. For example, General A. Lebed promised, after the mighty Armed Forces of Russia are restored, "to establish order not only in the Caucasus, but also over the entire post-Soviet territory." For this, in his opinion, just four or five years will suffice. V. Anpilov, a well-known participant in the coup staged by the State Committee for the State of Emergency, plans to accomplish this task even faster. He proposes that no later than two months following the presidential elections in Russia, a congress of the RSFSR soviets be convened and Soviet rule restored throughout Russian territory. In his profound conviction, this will become "a signal for the uprising of broad masses of working people in Ukraine and Kazakhstan under the leadership of Communists." He went on to say this: "We will give them the necessary assistance. All other republics of the former USSR will join the Union of their own will."

Just like that. Simple and clear. While we here rack our brains to decide what kind of state we should build — with a market, half-market, or socialist economy. All for nothing. A scenario is ready in Moscow, and everything has been decided there. It only remains to set D-day. For us, it remains to wait for the new "liberators" headed by Makashovs, Lebeds, Varennikovs, or other successors to the bloody butcher Muravyov [Russian historical military figure].

One thing remains unclear: Why does the present Russian president sleep at his post? Perhaps our president will not oversleep the crucial moment: It is still not too late to decisively establish order in our own home.

Ukraine: Official Says Intelligence Services Active in Sevastopol

LD2303154896 Kiev UNIAN in Ukrainian
1100 GMT 23 Mar 96

[FBIS Translated Text] Sevastopol — "The complicated sociopolitical and economic situation in the Sevastopol region draws the attention of foreign states, some of which are employing their secret services to collect, analyze, and assess information. Besides, foreign military intelligence services are interested in Sevastopol, as a naval base," Major General Volodymyr Kuntsevskyy [name as transliterated], chief of the Sevastopol directorate of the Security Service of Ukraine, has told journalists. He said 16 secret service agents who visited the city as part of foreign delegations were exposed last year alone. They were gathering information on a wide range of issues — from problems of dividing the Black Sea Fleet to demographic data on city residents.

Ukraine: NATO Expansion Seen as Main Goal of Christopher Visit

WS2203155396 Kiev KIYEVSKIYE VEDOMOSTI in Russian 21 Mar 96 p 3

[Commentary by Tetyana Silina: "Ukraine-United States: Bargaining Is Not Out of Place"]

[FBIS Translated Text] "Why did the chief U.S. diplomat come to Kiev?" — I and my colleagues asked our diplomats and government members, while following U.S. Secretary of State Warren Christopher from one government building to another. "Because the United States loves us very much. However, one must pay for love," mysteriously and jocularly one replied. There are enough confirmations and explanations of the Americans' ardent feelings for us.

Warren Christopher's visit to Kiev was the third Ukrainian-U.S. meeting during the past three months, and he highlighted this fact. Currently, other countries can hardly boast of monthly bilateral meetings with the U.S. leadership. Additionally, Ukraine has recently come first among CIS countries in terms of the volume of U.S. aid. During all meetings with Ukrainian leaders, Mr. Christopher did not stop repeating: The United States continues to firmly support Ukraine's independence, sovereignty, and territorial integrity. Perhaps one will deem this phrase a mere exchange of courtesy, but these words speak volumes for a diplomatic ear accustomed to detecting shades and nuances.

The U.S. secretary's phrase, which became a refrain, testifies to the United States' growing anxiety caused by the current integration moods within the CIS. Warren Christopher termed the State Duma's decision to denounce the Belovezhskaya forest agreements an "irresponsible step" aimed at "scaring someone," adding that it worries the United States as much as Ukraine. Although domestic and foreign politicians, vying with each another, are claiming that this decision has no legal force and has been opposed by the executive branch, many actions by the Russian executive authorities themselves, particularly by the Russian president, provide enough reasons for worry.

In this situation, the U.S. leadership, as we can see, does not rush to Minsk or Almaty, evidently considering them severed slices. It is in Ukraine that the United States is currently seeing a weak link able to break the chain of integration. It is Ukraine that the United State is currently considering as the main and only guarantee for not reviving the USSR. Hence this tide of love for our country.

One currently cannot but reckon with us, and it would be very unreasonable not to take advantage of this.

No matter how cynically this may sound, the current situation provides much room for bargaining for our country. And, judging by all the signs, the bargaining has already started.

Responding to KIEVSKIYE VEDOMOSTI's question, Ukrainian Foreign Minister Hennadiy Udovenko said that, in his opinion, the West somewhat "underestimates" the Duma's decision, because the "Communists will be consistent" with regard to issues concerning the revival of the Soviet Union. The Ukrainian side evidently wanted to let everybody know the following: since the "situation over integration" is so serious, the assistance to Ukraine, too, should be more serious, so that it has enough strength to counter the integrators.

What would Ukraine like to obtain? Of course, compensation for the tactical nuclear weapons withdrawn from its territory. While addressing journalists, Warren Christopher noted that Ukraine will become a nonnuclear state as soon as this year. "Maybe it will become a nonnuclear state, or maybe not;" I heard these words voiced in the wings by one of the Ukrainian experts. Shall we bargain?

Having wasted a year on negotiations and having received nothing concrete, the Ukrainian side insisted on adding the issue of closing the Chernobyl nuclear power plant as a separate item to the agenda of the April Moscow summit on nuclear safety issues. (True, it did not manage to receive an assent to this). Moreover, our side had several wishes concerning trade and economics. Hennadiy Udovenko asked his U.S. colleagues to more actively support Ukraine's efforts to join the General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade and the World Trade Organization, take into account our country's wish to join the Central European Free Trade Agreement at negotiations with our colleagues from East European countries, and help Ukraine receive the status of a country with a transitional economy (the world still considers our economy a centrally planned one).

However, NATO's eastward expansion is currently one of the main objects of the bargaining, which, naturally, is not advertised. As we have learned, it was consultations on this topic with the Ukrainian side on the eve of the Prague meeting that were the main goal of Warren Christopher's Kiev visit. Anticipating increased pressure from East Europeans after the Duma decision, the Americans considered it necessary to fly to Kiev before going to Prague, and hear Ukraine's opinion (let us note that Christopher will fly to Moscow after the Prague visit). One can quite confidently presume that during the negotiations, our leadership will let everybody understand that the East European neighbors' growing desire to merge with NATO by no means heartens Ukraine. This rather scares it, because this will certainly triple the "integrators'" wish to "integrate" our country as well. Moreover, left-wing forces may become much more active in Ukraine, if it ends up in a gray zone between two blocs. They will most likely focus their activity on "integrating." Therefore, I think that the pragmatic Americans, having calculated all options, will take into account Ukraine's wishes. After all, it was no accident that Warren Christopher once introduced, first to the U.S. and then to the international vocabulary, a definition of Ukraine as a "key country for European security." It should be added here, however, that as far back as 1959, our independence was described in a U.S. law as "vitally important for the national security of the United States."

So, there is only the question as to who should pay, to whom and for what. Perhaps one should pay for love with love?

Ukraine: Kuchma, Swiss Official Satisfied With Improving Relations

LD2203180696 Moscow INTERFAX in English 1650 GMT 22 Mar 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Geneva, March 22 (Interfax - Ukraine) — In their joint communique on the outcome of the talks Ukrainian President Leonid Kuchma and Swiss President [title as received — bureau records list Delamure as vice president] Jean Pascal Delamure expressed satisfaction with the "harmonious and dynamic development of relations between the two countries and reaffirmed their with to further strengthen and deepen them."

Switzerland has reaffirmed that she will further support economic and political reforms in Ukraine.

The President expressed satisfaction with the recent signing of two economic accords and agreed to sign soon an agreement on avoidance of double taxation.

The signing of a framework agreement on technical assistance between the two nations as well as the implementation of financial aid projects were evaluated in the course of the talks "as highly desirable".

Switzerland also welcomes Ukraine's intention to accede to the WTO (World Trade Organization).

Ukraine and Switzerland, which are nonaligned countries, the communique says, "emphasized the great significance they attach to OSCE [Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe], viewing that organization as "one of the mainstays of security architecture in Europe".

Ukraine has reaffirmed her wish to closely cooperate with that organization and supports the efforts of Switzerland as the country, which currently chairs OSCE.

The President of Ukraine has invited the President of the Swiss Confederation to pay an official visit to Ukraine at a time convenient to him.

Ukraine: Communique on Kuchma's Switzerland Visit

LD2303132596 Kiev Radio Ukraine World Service in Ukrainian 1100 GMT 23 Mar 96

[FBIS Translated Text] Here is a joint communique on the results of the official visit by Ukrainian President Leonid Kuchma to the Swiss Confederation.

The official visit by President Leonid Kuchma has special significance, because it is the first ever visit to Switzerland by a Ukrainian head of state since Ukraine obtained its independence.

The presidents of Ukraine and the Swiss Confederation expressed satisfaction with the harmonious and dynamic development of relations between the two countries and confirmed their desire to continue consolidating and deepening them. These bilateral relations could be further developed, particularly in economic and trade fields.

Switzerland took the opportunity to confirm again that it will continue to support economic and political reforms in Ukraine.

Switzerland welcomes Ukraine's intention to join the World Trade Organization.

As countries that do not belong to any military blocs, Ukraine and Switzerland emphasize the great importance they attach to the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe [OSCE]. They regard this organization as a pillar of the security structure in Ukraine. Ukraine reiterates its desire to cooperate closely with this organization and to support Switzerland's efforts in its role as chairman of the OSCE.

Both countries emphasize their interest in discussing issues of the future security pattern in Europe and the importance of preventive diplomacy as an instrument of maintaining peace and stability in Europe.

The two sides confirmed the importance of solving international problems by peaceful means.

Switzerland welcomed Ukraine's accession to the Council of Europe on 9 November 1995 as evidence of the fact that Ukraine is a sovereign state in the family of European nations.

The Ukrainian president expressed his gratitude for the warm welcome given to the Ukrainian delegation and invited the president of the Swiss Confederation to pay an official visit to Ukraine at a convenient time.

National Affairs

Ukraine: Nationalists Propose Kuchma Build His Own CIS

LD2203184596 Moscow INTERFAX in English 1533 GMT 22 Mar 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] KHARKOV, Mar 22 (Interfax - Ukraine) — The Russian Duma vote to nullify the 1991 accords which disbanded the former Soviet Union and founded the CIS will enable Ukraine to increase its political role in the post-Soviet space and the whole world, the nationalist Ukrainian National Assembly (UNA) said in its address to Ukrainian President Leonid Kuchma Friday.

The UNA proposed that Kuchma announce his readiness "to implement a CIS model without Russia" and initiate a CIS summit in Kiev without the participation of the Russian president.

All CIS accords must be signed again, but without Russia, while Ukraine must head the CIS defense union, the UNA said.

Senior UNA activist Anatoliy Lupynis told journalists in Kharkov that under the current situation, when the relations between the branches of power in Russia became aggravated, his organization regards Boris Yeltsin's visit to Kiev in early April as "extremely undesirable and unsafe for Ukraine."

Ukraine: National-Democrats Declare Anti-Communist Campaign

LD2303202796 Moscow INTERFAX in English 1803 GMT 23 Mar 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] KIEV, March 23 (Interfax - Ukraine) — Ukraine's national-democratic parties and movements have announced the beginning of collection of signatures for banning the Communist Party "as agents of a foreign country."

Such a decision was made at the session between representatives of the Ukrainian national-democratic parties and movements Saturday, a leader of the Popular Rukh of Ukraine party, Viktor Tsimbalyuk, told Interfax - Ukraine. The session involved the Ukrainian Republican Party, the Democratic Party of Ukraine, the Congress of Ukrainian Nationalists, the Popular Rukh of Ukraine, the Liberal Party and other parties and movements, he said.

Those at the sitting decided to hold rallies on May 1 of protest against "anti-state actions by the leftists" and to "do their best to make impossible the legal existence of the Communist Party of Ukraine in 1996."

"A national committee for putting Communism on trial has been created," Tsimbalyuk said. "Early agreements have been reached with the governmental structures of the Czech Republic, Slovakia, Poland and the Baltic countries for bringing Communism to trial," he said.

A rally will be held on Kiev's Sofia square on March 31 to protest the Russian State Duma's March 15 decision to denounce the 1991 Belovezh Accords which disbanded the USSR and founded the CIS.

Those at the session recommended that similar rallies be launched in other Ukrainian regions.

Ukraine: President Kuchma Signs Decree on Crimea

LD2203175996 Moscow INTERFAX in English 1650 GMT 22 Mar 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Kiev, March 22 (Interfax - Ukraine) — Ukrainian President Leonid Kuchma signed on March 15 the decree "On measures to stabilize and help towards socio-economic development of the Autonomous Republic of Crimea".

The decree supports the request of the Crimean government that 100 per cent of the value-added tax, excise duty, income tax on private persons and earnings from foreign trade be channelled in 1996 to the Crimean budget.

The Ukrainian Parliament has already endorsed in the debate in second reading on draft national budget for 1996 the tax rates to be channelled to the Crimean budget, which were proposed by the presidential decree of March 15.

The President of Ukraine has proposed the Autonomy's government to submit proposals to the Cabinet of Ministers on amendments to the law of Ukraine "Of Land Rent", to be adopted "with due regard for natural, recreational and other characteristic features of the territory of the Autonomous Republic of Crimea".

A number of Ukraine's ministries and departments have been instructed to take into account in the elaboration of the State Economic and Social Development Program of Ukraine for 1996 the measures to stabilize the social and economic situation in Crimea, proceeding from the need to meet population's most vital needs.

The Nationalities and Migration Ministry has been ordered to elaborate with the participation of ministries and departments concerned a draft state program for the adaptation and integration into the Ukrainian society of deported Crimean Tatars and other peoples, for the revival and development of their culture and education.

The Crimean government have been vested with the powers envisaged by the presidential decree # 61 signed February 21, 1994 on additional measures to vest the administrations of Dnipropetrovsk, Donetsk, Zaporizhzhya and Luhansk regions with the powers as regards the national property management (according to the list determined by the Cabinet of Ministers of Ukraine).

The Ukrainian Cabinet has been instructed to settle the issue of vesting the Crimean Government with the right to be a guarantor of short-term credits to business entities in the Autonomy's territory. Under the decree, the effort is to be funded out of a special regional fund to be created at the cost of Crimean 1996 budget.

The preamble to the decree says that it is designed "to create a stable legal-organizational basis for the development of positive socio-economic processes and efficient use of the potential of the Autonomous Republic of Crimea".

Ukraine: Explosions Reported in Crimea; Mafia Blamed

LD2403192596 Moscow NTV in Russian 1600 GMT 24 Mar 96

[From the "Segodnya" newscast]

[FBIS Translated Text] There were two explosions in Simferopol last night. The lobby and one of the exhibition halls at the international trade center were blown up. There were no casualties, but our correspondent was told that windows were blown out of all the high-rise buildings in the quarter. Some families had to call out the emergency ambulance service to help their frightened children.

Militia staff believe the explosions are intended as a warning and are the latest link in a chain of mafia shootouts which could provoke retaliation. According to militia information, criminal organizations are stepping up their activities as the resort season approaches. In spite of the fact that the names of the top people in the criminal world in the Crimea are well known, none of them have so far been brought up on charges.

Ukraine: American-Crimean Trade, Tourism Corporation Bombed

WS2503100096 Kiev INTELNEWS in English 0127 GMT 25 Mar 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Kiev, March 25. The headquarters of the American-Crimean corporation for tourism and trade, a branch of the Skif 88 Crimean association, was bombed by unknown persons on Saturday night.

Yakov Barkov is the president of the association and his son is the head of the center, which was founded by the American-Turkish-Crimean joint venture Acctusidt.

"The losses and damages of the explosion are the big sum comprising at least several KBV [karbovantsi] ten's of billions," the central administrative board of Ukrainian Internal Affairs Ministry in Crimea said Sunday, adding that an investigation is pending.

Economic Issues

Ukraine: Kuchma Discusses Investment With German Bankers

AU2103173596 Kiev HOLOS UKRAYINY in Ukrainian 20 Mar 96 p 2

[Unattributed report: "The 'Dresdner Bank' Will Invest in Our Economy"]

[FBIS Translated Text] Ukrainian President Leonid Kuchma has received Bernhard Walter, member of the board of the "Dresdner Bank." Wiegand Tiedemann, a new representative of the bank in Kiev, also took part in the meeting.

Further prospects of cooperation between Ukrainian and German financial circles were discussed. The "Dresdner Bank," which was the first Western bank to start activity in Ukraine back in 1992 and which continues financing a considerable part of external Ukrainian-German trade operations, intends to transform its mission in Kiev into a real branch of the bank. According to Bernhard Walter, the "Dresdner Bank" plans to take further steps for increasing the volume of investment in Ukraine. Such a decision, he said, is dictated by substantial changes in Ukraine's economic and political systems.

Ukrainian President Leonid Kuchma, greeting the German bankers, stressed that cooperation between our countries in the financial sphere will be useful for Ukraine from all points of view, including promotion of the establishment of the Ukrainian banking system.

Ukraine: Kuchma Notes 'Climate of Trust' With World Bank

LD2303155596 Kiev UNIAN in Ukrainian 1300 GMT 23 Mar 96

[FBIS Translated Text] Kiev — Ukraine's President Leonid Kuchma said during his meeting with Johannes Linn, vice president of the World Bank, that "a climate of trust, which is a sign of further successful cooperation" has of late been established between the World Bank and Ukraine. Kuchma said the current year would be "the most difficult year, from both the economic and sociopolitical points of view."

Linn told journalists that the World Bank would continue financing a number of new projects in Ukraine, support the projects that have already been launched, and contribute toward "the earliest possible implementation of these projects."

Roman Shpek, Ukraine's deputy prime minister for the economy, said the World Bank's package of projects for rendering aid to Ukraine would be targeted primarily to the development of science and education, housing construction, and development of urban transport.

Ukraine: Marchuk Pleased With Passage of National Budget

LD2303161296 Moscow INTERFAX in English 1359 GMT 23 Mar 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] KIEV, March 23 (Interfax - Ukraine) — Ukrainian Prime Minister Yevhen Marchuk told Interfax - Ukraine on Saturday that Friday's passage by parliament of a national budget for this year was "quite a serious and important event for the economic life of the country."

He described the budget as "the principal economic regulation law, which asserts the program course towards the reforming of the economy."

Passage of the budget and joint earlier work on it by the government and parliamentary commissions "have shown that we have possibilities for normal cooperation with the Verkhovna Rada (parliament)," he said.

The government is currently preparing a plan to change "the entire economic system which we have inherited from the past," he said. "Both on the legislative and executive levels as well as on the level of actual production there is an understanding of how the economy, most importantly industry, should be restructured."

Commenting on a proposal by 49 Communist parliamentary deputies for following the recent example of Russia's lower house of parliament, the State Duma, in rejecting 1991 accords which dissolved the Soviet Union, Marchuk said: "'Retro' style is beautiful and pleasant in music, clothes and art. In politics it is an impasse."

Ukraine: Government Targets Development of Gold Mining Industry

WS2503102996 Kiev INTELNEWS in English 0507 GMT 23 Mar 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Kiev, March 22 — Ukraine plans to begin mining from 34 gold fields before 1998, according to Vice Prime Minister Anatoly Kinakh.

Kinakh told the Cabinet of Ministers this week that pre-conditions exist for the establishment of a gold mining industry in the Muzhiivsky gold field in the Transcarpathian region, as well as three other gold fields before the year 1998.

According to the Vice Prime Minister, the Ministry of Industries in Ukraine has already established a managerial board in charge of the construction of a state gold and polymetal industrial plant in the Transcarpathian region. The Ministry has also determined the start-up schedule for the plant and selected the man-power needed to initiate production.

Kinakh said the new plant will utilize modern processing technologies, and both domestic and foreign investors are expected to contribute to the industry's development.

According to Kinakh, the minerals and raw materials needed for gold mining in Ukraine were first discovered in 1990, and as a result of follow-up prospecting, the following three gold fields have been identified: the Transcarpathian region, the Ukrainian "crystalline gate" in the northern and central regions of Ukraine, and the Donetsk-Azovsk region.

Ukraine: Supreme Council Approves Law on Foreign Investment

WS2003093396 Lvov INFOBANK in English 0732 GMT 20 Mar 96

[From the "News Service" feature]

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Kiev — On March 19, the Ukrainian Supreme Council approved a law entitled "On Foreign Investment Regime." According to this law, property contribution made by the foreign investor to capital assets of a joint venture is exempt from export tax. The law envisages privileged taxation for companies with foreign investments for the period of three years.

According to information provided to an INFOBANK correspondent by the head of the Parliamentary Sub-Commission for Economic Policy and Management, Hryhoriy Mozer, the law expands rights of the Cabinet of Ministers in the registration of investment projects and contracts and preserves privileged taxation for contacts signed before the adoption of the law.

The law "On Foreign Investment Regime" will come into effect after its publication in press.

Ukraine: Construction of Oil Terminal in Odessa Viewed

WS2203140396 Odessa ODESSKIYE IZVESTIYA in Russian 13 Mar 96 p 1

[Report by KIEVSKIYE VEDOMOSTI correspondent S. Korotych: "Only Big Politics Can Return the Money Buried in the Oil Terminal"]

[FBIS Translated Text] The battle between the two world giants — the United States and Russia — over the transportation of oil from the Apsheron oil-field in Azerbaijan has ended in a draw. Oil will be transported via two routes — through Georgia (Apsheron-Poti and then to Turkey) and through Russia (Apsheron-Groznyy- Novorossiysk). Both options (primarily, the Russian one) postulate that oil from Baku (Azerbaijan) will not involve the Ukrainian oil terminal. Experts of the "Kalina" analytical company drew this conclusion when they analyzed the political and economic situation in the oil-extracting and oil-exporting regions. However, when Ukraine launched the construction of its oil terminal close to Odessa, it placed its bets primarily on oil from Baku. Another source of oil for the Odessa oil terminal — from Turkey — could also be lost. Back in the fall, a representative of the National Liberation Front of Kurdistan arrived in Kiev, and said: "'Turkish' oil is extracted on the territory which the Kurds regard as their native land; therefore, without their permission, Turkey will not be able to fulfill its obligations to deliver oil to its partners." A logical question emerges: Why should an oil terminal be constructed? Would it not be better, despite the already used resources, to halt the construction and accept that the United States and Russia have outsmarted Ukraine in political terms?

But those at the construction site in Odessa are convinced that it is too early to bury their oil terminal because Ukraine needs it. However, if our state continues to be inactive it will be possible to drop this idea in the immediate future. Although Russia, which has plans to increase its oil exports to Europe, is expanding its port in Novorossiysk and is actively pushing Ukraine away from trade in this profitable product, some observers are sure that Russia is overestimating its capacities. According to specific estimates, there is not that much oil in Russia. Russia's share within the explored oil reserves in the world is 5.9 percent. This may be compared with the North America, whose relevant share is 3.9 percent and who preferred to mothball its oil wells for "future generations" and purchase oil abroad. If Russia keeps its high tempo of extracting the black gold, its reserves could be exhausted very soon. Then the services of middlemen will be required, and this was the purpose of the construction of the Odessa oil terminal. Anyway, supporters of its construction are convinced that events will develop in this way. But the Ukrainian Government has probably cooled off this project.

It was pointed out at the Collegium of the Ukrainian State Committee for Oil, Gas, and Oil-Processing Industry in February that the course of the construction is impeded due to the absence of critical financing. There were plans in 1994 to issue 1.900 trillion karbovantsi [K] from the state budget for the construction of this oil terminal, but only K641 billion were received, says a KIEVSKIYE VEDOMOSTI source. In 1995, K206 billion instead of K3.5 trillion, were obtained. At first, the draft budget for 1996 envisaged an amount of K6 trillion, then it was reduced to K2.9 trillion, but there are plans now to vote for only K1.4 trillion for this purpose in the state budget. To complete construction plans, some K130 trillion and $80 million — as an addition to the already invested K2.154 and $5.3 million from the beginning of the year — are required. As KIEVSKIYE VEDOMOSTI were told by founders of the "Ukrnaftaterm" joint-stock company, there is a search for additional sources of financing.

At issue here are both the issuing of credits and shares in the "Ukrnaftaterm" joint-stock company. Supporters of the victorious completion of the long-term construction project agree to depart from the initial principle — "only Ukrainians are the oil-terminal's owners" — and are inclined to attract foreign investors. Perhaps there are no hopes for state financing. The site is not so important in a national strategic sense and no longer produces an impression of being very profitable in the future. The search for money has shifted to the United States and Indonesia. Negotiations are being held with the European Bank for Reconstruction and Development [EBRD] in Washington and with commercial structures in Indonesia. It is difficult to understand the maneuvers of the "founders" of this oil terminal — because the United States has already taken care of its own interests. Perhaps this is not the last reason due to which negotiations with the EBRD have been dragging for months, and there seems to be no end to them. It is not understandable why Indonesia needs our oil terminal since investors are only attracted by large profits.

The "Ukrnaftaterm" joint-stock company continues to exist, but the same cannot be said about its participants. A wave of bankruptcies in the banking sector excluded several financial structures — founders of the "Ukrnaftaterm" — from the game. Judging by everything, "Ukrnaftaterm" should be reregistered. Everything should depend on big politics. Contrary to Ukraine, Russia has achieved success in big politics by strengthening its strategy of placing the main oil routes outside of Ukraine. At the time, quite founded rumors were actively being spread: To achieve this task, certain forces in Russia have launched every effort to halt the construction of an oil terminal in Odessa. Precisely this has been implemented.

Belarus

Belarus: Lukashenka's Push for Integration With Russia Detailed

MK2303121696 Moscow KOMMERSANT-DAILY in Russian 23 Mar 96 p 3

[Report by Natalya Kalashnikova: "Alyaksandr Lukashenka Between Renunciation and Integration"]

[FBIS Translated Text] The Belarusian president, who frightened Moscow with his hasty support for the Duma initiative on the "Belovezhskaya Forest issue" and then just as expeditiously decided not to quarrel with the Kremlin, has attracted enhanced attention from Russian politicians. Yesterday morning, in Minsk, Federation Council Speaker Yegor Stroyev and President Lukashenka discussed the "Belovezhskaya Forest subject." In the afternoon Alyaksandr Lukashenka was already expected in Moscow by Boris Yeltsin. The Belarusian president frankly shared his thoughts with Stroyev about the upcoming meeting at the Kremlin: He intends to present to Yeltsin "a real Belarusian-Russian union treaty, without any ambiguities."

Returning to the path of real, not rhetorical, integration, the Belarusian president assured Yegor Stroyev that he "will not turn off the main road." At that point the president departed for Moscow, while the speaker went off to meet his Belarusian colleague Semen Sharetskiy. Within the parliamentary walls, which only a couple of days ago were shaking from the stormy debate over the reinstitution of the USSR, the speakers signed a joint statement. It follows from the document that Stroyev and Sharetskiy focused their "attention on trade and economic relations and financial settlement procedures, and the elaboration of a mechanism to ensure the appropriate implementation of the agreements signed between the two countries, including on economic and customs unions." Plans for intergovernmental contacts were also mapped out, including at the level of committees and commissions; it was also agreed to sign in April an agreement on cooperation between the Federal Assembly of the Russian Federation and the Supreme Soviet of the Belarusian Republic.

Commenting on Lukashenka's revolutionary pro-integration statements, Stroyev deemed it appropriate to recall that the initiative for ensuring a rapprochement between the republics originates not only with Alyaksandr Grigoryevich [Lukashenka]; it was also aired at a meeting between the Russian and Belarusian presidents and received support from Yeltsin. "May God allow us to move calmly and surely," Stroyev observed philosophically, "looking for legal ways of integration; what we need is not a revolutionary but an evolutionary method." The integrationist fervor of the Belarusian president did not die down during his flight from Minsk to Moscow, while his wise appeal "to move toward greater integration without intrigue in parliaments" materialized in full. After exchanging opinions on the situation that evolved after the historic "Duma Friday" (Lukashenka was very forceful in condemning the "Belovezhskaya Forest action"), the presidents got down to discussing draft documents concerning integration. These drafts were worked out for several months, based on various integration options — from deep integration, providing for the creation of supranational agencies (to which Lukashenka agreed before flying to Moscow) to softer options. This time, considering the substantial expert work done on the problem, the presidents touched not only on the general parameters of integration, but also on some specific questions. Before the meeting Yeltsin aide Dmitriy Ryurikov did not rule out that the parties could discuss the powers of integration structures, the scope of integration, and, most importantly, how integration will reflect on the social and economic situation of both countries.

Meanwhile, the subject of integration, interest in which was aroused by the recent controversial decision by the Russian State Duma, is not confined to Belarus. Yesterday the Presidium of the Interstate Economic Committee of the CIS Economic Union approved, at its session in Moscow, a plan for the integration-based development of the Commonwealth in 1996-1997. Russian Deputy Premier Aleksey Bolshakov, who chaired the meeting, observed that the plan provides for drafting agreements and other conceptual documents expediting the creation of customs and currency unions, and deepening cooperation in production and investment activity. At the same time Alyaksandr Lukashenka is demonstrating a wish to speed up the course of events, trading on the "Belovezhskaya Forest wave" raised by the Russian State Duma. His remark in Minsk was apparently not accidental: "You must not put off until tomorrow what can be done today."

Belarus: Lukashenka on Union Treaty With Russia

LD2403214496 Moscow Russian Public Television First Channel Network in Russian 1900 GMT 24 Mar 96

[Report on interview with Belarus President Alyaksandr Lukashenka by correspondent Natalya Chernyshova, place and date not given; from the "Sunday" program]

[FBIS Translated Text] [Lukashenka] [Begin recording] We were the first to say that enough was enough, that the peoples could no longer be fooled. Let us sign a genuine treaty on a genuine union, with supra-national bodies, a common budget, and a common program. At this stage it will be a union of two sovereign states.

There will be a transitional period of 18 months or two years, we have not yet decided on the time scale. Within this transitional period we will prepare the entire normative basis and, possibly, will agree upon a common constitution. And then, possibly, we will discuss a single state.

[Chernyshova] The new entity will have supra-national structures whose decisions will be mandatory in both countries.

In what areas the supra-national bodies will be set up?

[Lukashenka] I will answer your questions, bearing in mind that the Russian president's press secretary will give you a detailed report. We have reached agreement on the substance of our talks. I will therefore only give a general outline.

First, there will be a Supreme Council, to be formed of the heads of all the branches of authority. There will be an Executive Committee, the government of this union. It will have a budget and will implement the decisions of this Supreme Council. And the third body that we are going to set up is a parliamentary congress, an interparliamentary congress with equal numbers of deputies from each side so that we can standardize our legislations and, in the future, adopt agreed laws. [end recording]

[Chernyshova] As to a single monetary system, the countries are not ready for this yet. The national currencies will have a parallel circulation and will be easily converted. At the initial stage, this will be no obstacle to financing most important joint programs. And the new Commonwealth, as stated in a separate entry, is open for other CIS countries to join in.

[Begin Lukashenka recording] This new commonwealth, the new union is in no way directed against the CIS. It has been born by the CIS. It will become the supreme stage of integration within the Commonwealth. A union of four — Kyrgyzstan, Kazakhstan, Russia, and Belarus — is a lower stage, while the CIS will remain the CIS, only with a lesser degree of integration. In other words, there will be three degrees of integration. [end recording]

[Chernyshova] It has been announced meanwhile that an agreement on a closer integration of four independent states — Russia, Belarus, Kazakhstan, and Kyrgyzstan — will be signed on 29 March. And on 2 April, the creation of the new Commonwealth will be announced, the ceremony to be attended by many members of the Russian and Belarusian public, as well as by Patriarch Aleksiy II — this way both presidents see the event. As if answering possible critics Aleksandr Lukashenka added:

[Begin Lukashenka recording] If the people have today nostalgic feelings about the collapsed Soviet Union, let us call it [the new union] SSR, that is, the Union of Sovereign Republics. If this is not the case — sociologists should carry out a poll and tell us — we will call it a Commonwealth. [end recording]

[Chernyshova] The agreement is yet to be ratified by the parliaments of the two countries, but the Belarusian president has no doubts about future success.

Belarus: Opposition Leader Warns Bloodshed Will Follow New Union

LD2303215296 Moscow NTV in Russian
1600 GMT 23 Mar 96

[Video report from Belarus by correspondent Aleksandr Stupnikov; from the "Segodnya" newscast; passages contained within quotation marks are recorded]

[FBIS Translated Excerpt] [Stupnikov] The statement by the Belarusian president on the signing of a union treaty between Russia and Belarus, possibly on 2 April, has evoked a sharp reaction from the opposition in Minsk.

Today, Zyanon Paznyak, leader of the Belarusian Popular Front, warned outright that the formation of a single union state with supranational structures of power may lead to bloodshed.

[Paznyak] "That is a big mistake. If you are trying to swallow Chechnya somehow, you will choke on Belarus. There is no doubting that. There is no need for you to prepare for yourself the fate of standing up to your neck in blood."

[Stupnikov] Mykhaylo Horyn, a Ukrainian parliamentary deputy, described the possibility of the creation of a new union state as the manifestation of Russian imperialism and the repetition of mistakes of the past.

[Horyn] "I think that this is the beginning of the end of an independent Belarusian state. I think that for Russia, for a democratic Russia, which dreams of the creation of a Russian national state, it is also a very great defeat. There cannot be democracy in an empire." [passage omitted]

[Stupnikov] Syargey Kalyakin, first secretary of the Belarusian party of communist party in Belarus, assessed the events as a quite natural process.

[Kalyakin] "That will not be the Soviet Union in the form in which it existed. It will be a new political formation and it is even difficult to say today what it will be."

[Stupnikov] President of Belarus Alyaksandr Lukashenka, who in many ways initiated the unification, in an earlier exclusive interview to NTV, called the creation of a union state just about the main aim of his policy.

[Lukashenka] "Why should Lukashenka and Yeltsin miss their opportunity to do a good deed for these peoples and to remain forever as good leaders in the memories of the Belarusian and Russian peoples?"

[Stupnikov] It seems official Minsk is evidently in a hurry today to register the political rules of the game around integration and at the same time, wear the laurels of unifiers.

To all appearances the time for mulling things over by official Minsk and official Moscow about integration is over. Meanwhile, the nationally-oriented forces of Belarus intend to hold rallies and processions tomorrow dedicated to the 78th anniversary of the Belarusian People's Republic. It can be said today however, that tomorrow's events will not only be a show of force by the opposition, but also an act of protest.

Belarus: Independence Activist Appeals to Ukraine for Support

AU2203161596 Kiev NARODNA HAZETA in Ukrainian No. 12 (242) Mar 96

["Appeal by the Sojm of the Belarusian Popular Front to the Ukrainian People, People's Rukh, and All Patriotic Forces of Ukraine: Guard Ukraine!"]

[FBIS Translated Text] Much esteemed Syabry [Friends], Colleagues, and Sworn Brothers,

We appeal to you at this time, which is extremely difficult for Belarus. Our fatherland is under the threat of losing its independence and having its national wealth plundered. The country has found itself under the power of Russian special services and their proteges. The Belarusian national state symbols have been trampled, and artificial Bolshevik ones restored; the Belarusian school is being destroyed; Belarusian text books are being banned, and Belarusian encyclopedias are going under the knife. The Belarusian language is almost not heard on Belarusian television or radio. The president is publicly discrediting Belarusian independence, language, and historical sacred objects.

Alongside the destruction of all things Belarusian, the government is undergoing intensive criminalization. Presidential structures openly seize state property and budget funds. Reforms have been paralyzed, Belarus' economic infrastructure is handed over to Russia, and Russian capital has started to prevail in our country. It is not even a matter of corruption, but of methodical pillage of the country by the government.

President Lukashenka pathologically hates all things Belarusian not only because he lacks culture, but also because he realizes that it is primarily the self-aware national forces who come out in defense of the nation's wealth, property, and interests.

Dear Ukrainians,

The policy of the Russian empire has always been aggressive, insidious, and hostile to our peoples. If the empire succeeds in capturing Belarus, this will become the first step toward seizing Ukraine. Do not succumb to any hypocritical Moscow initiatives or attempts to interfere in your state life, and do not agree to any "integrations." An imperialistic state cannot be democratic. "The monster is huge, corpulent, mean, has a hundred jaws, and is barking" [quote from Russian historian Vasiliy Tredyakovskiy]; this has not changed over the centuries, and our nations are aware of this better than anybody else.

The bloody Moscow power is now waging its new colonial war and carrying out genocide against the Chechen people. Crime against mankind is the mode of existence of the empire. It is capable of doing the same to Ukrainians and to everybody and everywhere, just as it dealt with our peoples in the 1920's, 1930's, and 1940's. There is no difference between Kremlin Bolsheviks and Kremlin imperialists. Aren't the bitter experiences of Chechnya, Georgia, Moldova, the Caucasian peoples, and now also Belarus a confirmation of this?

Guard Ukraine!

The free and independent Ukraine may become a stronghold of freedom in eastern Europe. A nation that is not free and not independent on its own land cannot be prosperous and happy. Freedom, an independent state, and culture are the greatest national values.

Now that Russia is trying to carry out "quiet occupation" of Belarus, when a cold war is in progress against our nation, increasing numbers of people are beginning to understand the significance of national values. The Belarusian Popular Front acts as a national-liberation force. We will fight for our independence, for the ideals of freedom, decency, democracy, and culture, knowing that the Belarusians have allies in this sacred struggle.

Glory to free Ukraine!

Long live independent Belarus!

[Signed] Zenon Paznyak, chairman of the Belarusian Popular Front.

Belarus: Details on Minsk Independence Rally

LD2403185296 Minsk BELAPAN in Russian 1645 GMT 24 Mar 96

[FBIS Translated Text] A march and a rally were held in Minsk today to mark the 78th anniversary of the declaration of independence of the Belarusian People's Republic.

The participants of this event were to gather in Independence Square by 1200 Minsk time. Sergey Navumchyk, press secretary of the Belarusian People's Front, said later at the rally that militia had used force against a group of citizens who tried to enter the square. Some of those citizens were severely beaten.

After 1200, a column of participants in the event began their march along the pavement of Frantsysk Sroryna Avenue to the Opera and Ballet Theater where the city' authorities allowed the organizers to hold a rally. The rally began at 1300 as planned. According to varying estimates from the organizers, from 30,000 to 50,000 people attended the rally. However, some journalists, who observed the event, estimated the number of its participants at 10,000-15,000. In any event, this is the biggest mass action in Minsk since April 1991, when there were workers' demonstrations in Minsk. It was also evident that at least half of the participants were young people.

The rally was held under the slogans calling to prevent a union treaty between Belarus and Russia and those saying "Down with Lukashenka!." In his address, Sergey Navumchyk in particular noted that the event was not just a tribute to the history, but also the awareness of the threat "that has been brought by the imperial policy of Kremlin and its Shklov [Lukashenka is from Shklov] supporter." Genadz Karpenka, deputy chairman of the Supreme Soviet of Belarus, expressed the general opinion of those at the rally, saying that Belarus can solve the current situation only through statehood and independence.

Vasil Bykaw, a well-known Belarusian writer, said: "We will never accept a red-brown Russia... We are with the Russian democrats."

Stanislav Bagdankevich, the leader of the parliamentary faction Civic Action, said that at the start of his presidential term Lukashenka promised to resign if he failed to fulfill his election promises — and added: The head of state is today trying to trade Belarusian statehood for a chance to stay in power.

Zyanon Paznyak, the chairman of the Belarusian People's Front, added: From the moment of signing a union treaty with Russia Lukashenka will cease to be the president... According to our laws he will be liable to be tried in court... The imperial forces in Russia should not expect that they will be allowed to swallow Belarus — they will choke on Belarus... Paznyak described the address of Yegor Stroyev, the chairman of the Federation Council of Russia, in the Belarusian Supreme Soviet on 22 March, as humiliating for Belarusians and concluded: Such people as Stroyev have no place in Belarus. Paznyak called on everyone "to stand up in defense of their homeland."

The rally participants adopted a resolution that says: The Belarusian servants of the bosses in Kremlin are now trying to keep their power at any cost. They are prepared to sell our country and to sacrifice the future of our children and grandchildren to the Russian empire. All this is done only in order to grab our land and to provide the Russian army with fresh cannon meat for all current and future wars of the empire. Only Belarusian independence can protect us from that. By his antistate actions, Alyaksandr Lukashenka has placed himself outside the Constitution and lost the right to be the president of an independent Republic of Belarus. We, participants of the rally marking the 78th anniversary of the independence of the Belarusian People's Republic, demand that the Supreme Soviet, the government, the Armed Forces, militia, and the internal troops of Belarus should comply with the Constitution and defend the independence of the Republic of Belarus. We demand that the implementation of the adventurist plans to surrender our state should be prevented. Let all those instrumental in the destruction of the independence of the country know: Time will come to answer in all the severity of the law and the national court."

Krzysztof Krol, deputy of the Polish Sejm, also spoke at the rally. He stressed that Belarusians, Ukrainians, and Poles should "stick together — together we are stronger than the Russian communist nomenklatura... He who betrays a flag, a coat of arms, and people — is not a president..."

The rally participants demanded that the militia release Vital Ramashewski who, according to Vintsuk Vyachorka, the deputy chairman of the Belarusian People's Front, was arrested by militia in Independence Square for shouting the national motto: "Long live Belarus!." It was stated that otherwise the rally will march to the Department of Internal Affairs of Moskovskiy District of Minsk, where Ramashewski is being held. Some time later the organizers of the rally announced that Ramashewski had been released.

At the proposal of Syarhey Antonchyk, a former deputy of the Supreme Soviet of Belarus, the rally participants held a collection (in Belarusian notes of small denomination) "for a ticket to Tyumen for Lukashenka." Two plastic bags full of notes were collected. It is not known yet how this money will be passed on to Lukashenka.

At the rally it was decided to send a delegation consisting of Z. Paznyak, G. Karpenka, S. Navumchyk, and S. Gusak to the Belarusian television where they will demand open airtime to address the Belarusian people. However, later the rally participants supported an idea to go to the television center in Kommunisticheskaya Street all together.

By 1500, outside the Belarusian television center there had gathered a considerable part of the participants of the celebration — 5,000-10,000 people. The building had already been surrounded by militia. After the representatives of the rally participants were stopped by the second militia cordon, the rest of the participants of the action spontaneously broke through the first militia chain and came right up to the building. As a result the delegation was allowed into the center. In one of the rooms Z. Paznyak tried to reach Rygor Kisel, head of the Belarusian television, by telephone. He failed to do so because his official number did not answer. The employees of the Belarusian television who were in the building in Kommunisticheskaya Street did not have the authority or capacity to provide airtime.

Meanwhile, a rally was held outside the building. At approximately 1540, an OMON [Special Purpose Militia Detachment] detachment and special purpose troops began attempts to push the rally further from the building. They managed to do so after 10 minutes or so — with the help of rubber batons and special shields. A number of citizens were physically hurt. Meanwhile, new militia and internal troops units were being moved to the venue of the rally. Altogether, according to independent estimates, at least 5,000 soldiers and officers were involved in this militia operation.

At approximately 1600, the rally participants with Z. Paznyak at their head, having failed to receive airtime on television, headed for the Museum of the First Congress of the RSDWP [Russian Social-Democratic Workers' Party] in the same street. Z. Paznyak told the participants about the failure to receive airtime and called on them to gather in Independence Square on 2 April, when Lukashenka plans to sign in Moscow a union treaty with Russia.

Commenting on the events at the request of BELAPAN, Z. Paznyak said: Our authorities should not expect that they can sell Belarus and that Belarusians will submit to that subserviently. Belarusians are patient, but they are not slaves. Today's events have proved it. Let Russia know: Chechnya will seem insignificant in comparison...

Belarus: Joint Statement on Talks With Russian Parliamentarians

WS2503121696 Minsk NARODNAYA GAZETA in Belarusian 23-25 Mar 96 p 2

[Statement by parliamentary delegations of the Federation Council of the Russian Federation Federal Assembly and the Belarusian Supreme Soviet, issued in Minsk, date not given]

[FBIS Translated Text] Talks between delegations of the Federation Council of the Russian Federation Federal Assembly and the Belarusian Supreme Soviet were held in the city of Minsk 22-23 March 1996. The delegations were headed by I.S. Stroyev, chairman of the Federation Council of the Russian Federation Federal Assembly, and S.H. Sharetski, chairman of the Belarusian Supreme Soviet.

During the talks, the sides exchanged information about the work of their countries' legislative bodies, the state and primary directions of the Russian and Belarusian parliaments' legislative work, and prospects for further cooperation.

The sides confirmed their mutual interest in deepening parliamentary interaction aimed at developing integration processes between the two states as much as possible.

They expressed their readiness to actively contribute to the establishment and improvement of a legislative basis for business-like partnership in all primary areas of the two states' life.

The sides agreed to set up a mixed parliamentary commission of the Russian Federation Federal Assembly and the Belarusian Supreme Soviet to jointly draft legislative acts securing the integration process and deepening interparliamentary cooperation.

The delegations discussed the situation connected with ratifying bilateral treaties and agreements.

Particular attention was attached to issues concerning the improvement of trade, economic, payment, and monetary relations and the development of a mechanism to control the implementation of agreements signed by the two states, including those concerning the economic and customs unions to which the Russian Federation and Belarus belong.

The parliamentary delegations agreed to invigorate further contacts, including those between the two countries' parliamentary committees and commissions.

The delegations examined certain aspects of interaction in the international arena as well. It was unanimously admitted that it is necessary to more precisely coordinate the work of both countries' parliamentary delegations participating in the work of various international interparliamentary organizations, and coordinate the positions of the Russian Federation and Belarus on issues of mutual interest.

The sides expressed their intense interest in improving the work of the CIS Interparliamentary Assembly. They noted the importance of institutions of multilateral cooperation for the consolidation of political stability in CIS counties in general, and the Russian Federation and Belarus in particular.

During the visit, the delegations agreed to conclude the agreement on interparliamentary cooperation between the Russian Federation Federal Assembly and the Belarusian Supreme Soviet, which the sides intend to sign during a reciprocal visit by Belarusian Supreme Soviet Chairman S.H. Sharetski.

[Signed] S.H. Sharetski, chairman of the Belarusian Supreme Soviet, and I.S. Stroyev, chairman of the Federation Council of the Russian Federation Federal Assembly.

Belarus: Foreign Minister Receives Russian Delegation

WS2503122296 Minsk BELAPAN in English
0731 GMT 25 Mar 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] On the afternoon of March 22 the chief of the Belarusian foreign office, Uladzimir Syanko, received the delegation of the Russian Council of the Federation, led by Yegor Stroyev. In his opening address Mr. Syanko pointed out that he was impressed by the meeting between the Russian delegation and President Lukashenka and Mr. Stroyev's speech at the session of the Belarusian parliament. He stressed that the aspiration of the governments and peoples of the two countries to closer integration should be used as better as possible. Mr. Syanko holds that today there are no influential political forces in Belarus which oppose closer integration with Russia. As for the idea of economic integration, the national referendum of May 1995 showed that Belarusians back it. It is clear that economic integration cannot go without political and military ones.

Mr. Stroyev pointed out that the formation of a union between Belarus and Russia should begin with the establishment of an interparliamentary committee because in the first instance it is essential to unify legislations. Uladzimir Syanko and Yegor Stroyev agreed with each other that the formation of a union is a very difficult and delicate task, and the countries should not rush to its fulfillment. In addition Yegor Stroyev knows, according to him, that in the Belarusian political elite there are people who hold that the formation of a union between Belarus and Russia constitutes a danger to Belarusian sovereignty and independence. Mr. Syanko expressed the thought that it would be better if such a union were formed by three-four, not two, states.

Belarus: CIS Executive Secretary Meets With Russian Delegation Head

WS2503122196 Minsk BELAPAN in English
0731 GMT 25 Mar 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] On the afternoon of March 22 the chief of the upper chamber of the Russian parliament, Yegor Stroyev, had a 30-minute meeting with CIS Executive Secretary Ivan Karatchenya at the Minsk-based CIS Headquarters. On the completion of this meeting, mixing with journalists, both of them expressed their opinion about the process of integration between Belarus and Russia.

Mr. Stroyev pointed out that since the two countries are being brought together, the preservation of sovereignty is getting in question. "I understand this doubt. Sovereignty is the basis, the foundation of this union. To encroach on sovereignty means to go back to a unitary state. Our delegation and the Council of the Federation as a whole do not support such a way," Mr. Stroyev said. According to him, integration should begin with economics. In addition the countries should establish supernational bodies, solve problems concerning not only the borders but also "the financing of a uniform price parity", and the formation of financial-industrial groups. Only after this the countries "may establish such government bodies the decisions which will be binding for each state which will be a member of this union".

Mr. Karatchenya said he was sure that "everything that is being done is within the framework of the CIS". In his opinion, in the near future the CIS will be preserved and will develop closer economic ties. The integration that was initiated by Belarus and Russia is the creation of a center which all the countries of the CIS will be able to join. Mr. Karatchenya expressed confidence that the countries forming the center will have advantages over those joining it later.

Moldova

Moldova: Parliament Speaker Sees Duma Resolution as 'Propaganda'

AU2303201896 Chisinau INFOTAG in English 2030 GMT 22 Mar 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Chisinau, March 22 (INFOTAG) — A political propaganda before elections — that's how the Moldovan Parliament Chairman Petru Lucinschi has called the Russian Duma's Resolution on Belovezh Accords denunciation.

In his exclusive interview with INFOTAG, Mr. Lucinschi stated that "this is a propaganda trick aimed at winning the hearts of the Russian electorate before the June-scheduled presidential elections".

"We have a certain campaigning experience, and know what the price and objectives of populism are. However, in this particular case the Duma has gone beyond all imaginable limits. Nobody can return to the past. I feel pity for those people, mostly old-aged, who are nostalgic about the Soviet past, and mistake the fraternity idea for the restoration of the empire which has collapsed under the pressure of objective historic development", he said.

"However, the State Duma is not yet the official Russia which regards the Resolution as a juridical absurd and an encroachment on the Russian statehood — exactly like we do", Lucinschi stressed.

Denying accusations voiced in some Chisinau media concerning the Parliament's silence with regard to the Resolution, Lucinschi has reminded that the official Moldovan position had been formulated in the Statement by the Moldovan Foreign Ministry which was agreed upon with the Parliament, and in the Statement of President Snegur, where the Duma's Resolution has been recognized as devoid of any legal force in what concerns the Republic of Moldova. "In case the Duma keeps on voting for decisions causing further tension, the Moldovan Parliament shall react accordingly", the Speaker said.

Moldova: Tiraspol Leader: Duma Resolution 'Trump Card' for Snegur

AU2203161996 Chisinau BASAPRESS in English 2100 GMT 21 Mar 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Tiraspol 21/3/1996 (BASA-press) — The Russian State Duma resolution on denouncement of CIS Constitution Accords signed at Belovezhskaya Pushcha might become a trump card for President Snegur and the rightwing opposition "in the fight against the government and Parliament," according to Andrei Safonov, one of the leaders of the Movement for Development of Dniester.

He told BASA that "the unionist opposition will give support to President Snegur, who is considered to be the only protector of Moldova's national interests."

He thinks radical forces in Tiraspol might try to frustrate the Chisinau-Tiraspol talks by all means, trying to maintain the uncertainty until presidential elections in Russia.

The Dniester Moldovans' Union, which also comprises the bloc of leftist forces led by Professor Vasiliy Yakovlev, welcomed the denouncement of the Belovezhskaya Pushcha accords by the Russian State Duma.

Yakovlev told BASA that "as long as Boris Yeltsin is at power in Moscow, the denouncement of the Belovezhskaya Pushcha accords will have no juridical effects."

Earlier, Tiraspol Parliament Chairman Grigori Marakutsa said the Duma resolution does not correspond with the real situation.

Moldova: Creanga Scandal Said Triggered by Russian Concern

AU2203212396 Bucharest ZIUA in Romanian 18 Mar 96 p 4

["Dispatch" from Chisinau by Dinu Popa: "Snegur Does Not Suit the Interests of GAZPROM"]

[FBIS Translated Excerpt] The political commentators in Chisinau believe that the fight that broke out between the people of [Prime Minister Andrei] Sangheli and President Mircea Snegur has nothing to do with political interests. The actions undertaken by Snegur do not suit the interests of the GAZPROM Russian concern, which exports oil and natural gas to eastern Europe. They could forgive Snegur for everything, such as the Romanian language issue, his preference for Slanic Moldova, his Western orientation, his strong reliance on Washington, and even his flirting with NATO — writes Boris Vieru, in an article published by weekly FLUX — except for his attempt to buy oil from Iran to fill the lamps of the exhausted peasants, or import coal from Romania and electricity from Poland or Cernavoda [Romanian nuclear plant]. This could be fatal for him. According to the aforementioned author, the entire scandal in Bessarabia [Moldova] is simply a warning signal that Andrei Sangheli sent to Mircea Snegur, telling him not to cause any problems for GAZPROM.

In a press conference held on 15 March, Creanga [former Moldovan defense minister] also made vague references to [Snegur's talks with Romanian President Ion Iliescu in] Slanic Moldova, adding that Snegur lies at the mercy of certain political forces. [passage omitted]

Moldova: Snegur-Cabinet Struggle on Land Sales Viewed

AU2203183596 Chisinau BASAPRESS in English 2100 GMT 21 Mar 96

["Economic commentary" by BASA-press]

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Chisinau 21/3/1996 (BASA-press) — The Cabinet of Ministers anticipated the parliamentary debates on the presidential initiative on land sale by adopting a resolution on this issue. The cabinet, which has repeatedly favored a step-by-step promotion of the agrarian reform, views as "premature for now the initiative to make land tradable." According to Vice Premier Ion Gutu, the law on land sale will be inoperative since there is no land survey and a real mechanism for its implementation. Many cabinet members think the presidential initiative lacks well-grounded motivation. The rejection of the initiative to constitute a land market might arouse negative reactions forecast with so many details by opponents and followers of the current cabinet, which seems aware of that. As an anticipation of them, the government used the evasive formulation "the government does not reject, in principle, the idea of land sale."

Deputy Speaker Dumitru Motpan, who said two weeks ago that Parliament would debate on the presidential legislative initiative only after receiving a notification from the cabinet and local administrations, has insinuated that the resolution Parliament is to adopt would be "a compromise, but a correct one." In its attempt to get one more vote in his confrontation with Snegur over a crucial economic issue, the Sangheli cabinet required the opinion of local public administrations. The findings of the survey could be easily forecast, since local governments are mainly controlled by the ruling party.

According to the government resolution, most district executive boards and city mayoralties pronounced themselves against the suggestion to make land tradable. The categorical statement by Premier Sangheli seems very relevant. According to him, it is not important who will adopt the decision on land sale "in the near future," because this will be the last decision. Taking into account the recent developments, one may assume that the premier referred to the presidency, which attempted to speed up the constitution of the land market in Moldova.

The government's decision was qualified by opposition representatives as a dispute of President Snegur's legislative initiative. According to Simion Certan, leader of the National Peasants' Party and member of the Peasants and Intellectuals Bloc, the government "actually rejected" the presidential initiative, even though governmental arguments that there are no adequate laws and mechanisms do not hold much water. "The idea of land sale should be first accepted, and after that the mechanism and the adequate juridical framework should be worked out, which is within the cabinet's competence," said Certan.

Moldova: Vulcanesti Population Demands Inclusion in Gaguz Yeri

AU2203183496 Chisinau BASAPRESS in English 2100 GMT 21 Mar 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Chisinau 21/3/1996 (BASA-press) — Over 200 people blocked today the entrance into the building of the Vulcanesti District Executive Committee demanding solution to the problem of transfer of villages that wished to enter Gagauz Yeri.

Four deputies of the People's Assembly, representing the Vulcanesti District, participated in the protests.

The protesters demanded enforcement of the law on modifications in the administrative-territorial organization after creation of Gagauz Yeri and the entry of Vulcanesti into Gagauz Yeri unconditionally and without delay.

They also protested against the transfer of several enterprises and institutions in Vulcanesti under Chisinau jurisdiction and the creation of a separate district with the center in Vulcanesti, which would include the 14 Moldovan villages of the former Vulcanesti District.

The protesters sent Moldovan President Snegur a petition, which contains these demands.

After three hours of talks between protesters and representatives of Gagauz authorities, it was agreed to suspend protests, and postpone the rally scheduled for 24 March until 28 March.

Georgi Ivanoglo, representative of the Gagauz governor in Vulcanesti District, has encouraged the creation of a free economic zone in Vulcanesti.

Chisinau authorities earlier said this could be a possible solution to the conflict caused by the transfer of several Vulcanesti District villages to Gagauz Yeri.

Ivanoglo told the local newspaper VESTI GAGAUZII that "this seems the best way to solve the problem of the Vulcanesti town and district."

The Moldovan Economy Ministry and the Gagauz Economy Department have recently discussed issues on creation of a free economic zone.

Ivan Bejan, vice chairman of the Gagauz People's Assembly, told BASA that representatives of many enterprises in Vulcanesti were indignant over the delay in transferring villages that wished to enter Gagauz Yeri.

Vasili Uzun, Gagauz Yeri vice governor, said the village Copceac of Taraclia District, as well as Etulia and Vulcanesti have not yet been passed to Gagauz Yeri due to divergences over partition of assets.

According to Uzun, local authorities in Burlaceni, Vulcanesti District, and Sadac, Comrat District, petitioned the Moldovan government to conduct a referendum on adherence to Gagauz Yeri.

Tudor Nireanu, head of the local public administration section at the Moldovan government, told BASA that "the Vulcanesti problem is close to be solved; its solution is in the competence of the governmental commission headed by Vitalie Slipenchi, vice economy minister. As to the petitions to conduct a referendum, responsible officials are minutely analyzing them to respect all current legal requirements."

Earlier, the Vulcanesti District Executive Board favored a repeat referendum in Vulcanesti on entry in Gagauz Yeri.

Veaceslav Gheletchi, head of the Anti-Monopoly and Competition Development Section of the Moldovan Economy Ministry, stated the creation of a free economic zone in Vulcanesti was debated, but its concept is only at the initial stage.

It was the initiative of local authorities to set up free economic zones. The final decision, however, rests with Parliament.

The Moldovan Economy Ministry will examine all projects and technical and economic arguments for the creation of a free economic zone, said Gheletchi.

Kazakhstan

Kazakhstan: Nazarbayev Cites European Union as Model for CIS

*LD2203182696 Moscow INTERFAX in English
1605 GMT 22 Mar 96*

[From the "Presidential Bulletin"]

[FBIS Transcribed Text] The European Union will be a model for four CIS states in integration toward a new alliance, President Nursultan Nazarbayev has declared in an interview with Interfax.

"We are working on such an association along with Russia's President Boris Yeltsin," Nazarbayev said suggesting to name it a Eurasian Union since "it will comprise two Asian states - Kazakhstan and Kyrgyzstan - plus two European states - Russia and Belarus."

This issue and the Georgian President Shevardnadze's proposal to hold a CIS summit were in focus during Nazarbayev's telephone conversation with Yeltsin Wednesday.

Describing such a summit as unnecessary, Nazarbayev said: "there would be nothing to discuss there since all heads of state have already voiced their views on the State Duma's resolution, denouncing the Belovezhye agreements." However, he disclosed that the presidents of Russia, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, and Belarus are to meet in Moscow at the end of this month to sign a treaty on closer economic and humanitarian integration. "If this meeting coincides with the CIS summit, I will attend it," Nazarbayev said.

Dwelling on the document in a greater detail, Nazarbayev suggested that "the state of CIS today does not satisfy anyone" since "nations want integration to be effective." Saying that he has spared no effort to make it effective, he recalled that toward this end "he had spelled out the idea of a Eurasian Union in 1994.

Nazarbayev also recalled that the formation of the Customs Union by Russia, Kazakhstan, and Belarus has enabled the three countries to boost their trade. Kyrgyzstan, Uzbekistan, and Tajikistan have applied to join in.

The previous Moscow summit called for giving integration processes a fresh impetus and "creating a more viable and effective structure than CIS," Nazarbayev said, stressing that such a structure should rest exclusively on the principles of equality of all participants, respect for their independence and state sovereignty.

A treaty on closer economic and humanitarian cooperation, according to Nazarbayev, presupposes the formation of a single customs mechanism and of energy payment, transportation and interbank unions. "This way, we are creating a single economic environment," the president noted, adding that "in time, when reform and economic stabilization will reach a certain level, a transition to equivalent money, supranational currency, like in Europe."

To put this project into effect, a supreme interstate council should be formed to comprise presidents and prime ministers, an integration committee should be set up to monitor compliance with the decisions taken by the council, and an interparliamentary committee should also be created, Nazarbayev said.

Speaking against the USSR rebirth in any form, Nazarbayev voiced dislike for a confederation as well. What we need is "a civilized economic and cultural integration to bring states and nations closer together," Nazarbayev declared.

The draft of a treaty on economic and humanitarian integration of Belarus, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, and Russia has been discussed at a session of the republican Security Council in Almaty, chaired by Nazarbayev.

The session also discussed safety issues in connection with visa- free entry by aliens into Kazakhstan.

Such uncontrolled entry, the president stressed, "creates public tension in the republic," and breeds crime.

By official statistics alone, 5000 Chechens have arrived in Kazakhstan, where the population of Chechens and Ingushs is estimated at 40,000, Nazarbayev said, citing cases of money extortion by Chechens in East Kazakhstan and criminal actions in the Pavlodar and other regions.

"Kazakhstan favours a peaceful settlement of the Chechen crisis," and "the unceasing bloodshed in the zone of the conflict arouses among all Kazakhs a feeling of regret," the president said, adding that although local authorities help those who arrive in Kazakhstan from the zone of the conflict, "the humane attitude does not mean that we will put up with criminal actions, perpetrated by some persons."

Nazarbayev asked the power ministries to focus on these problems and put control over the entry of aliens into Kazakhstan.

The Security Council also endorsed public and ecologic safety concepts, examined the situation at the national nuclear center, and discussed its safety problems.

Kazakhstan: Nazarbayev Rules Out CIS Political Integration

LD2303184896 Almaty Kazakh Television First Program Network in Russian 1500 GMT 23 Mar 96

[FBIS Translated Text] A visit by Kazakh President Nursultan Nazarbayev to Moscow is expected. During the meeting of the heads of four states — Russia, Belarus, Kyrgyzstan, and Kazakhstan — a treaty to expand economic and humanitarian integration is also possible. In the run-up to this event, President N. Nazarbayev met journalists, both Russian and foreign.

[Begin Nazarbayev recording] Well, it is no a secret that nobody is satisfied with the present condition of the CIS. Because decisions adopted are not being implemented, and the Commonwealth of Independent States, as we call the CIS, is in this sort of condition: We are, as it were, together, and at the same time everyone is doing his own thing.

At the last meeting of heads of state in Moscow, on 19 January, we spoke about setting up a new integration association, more lively and more active than the CIS. This proposal received support, and we started to prepare the corresponding draft documents.

So as to avoid different interpretations and opinions on this issue, I want say very clearly that the integration association can be exclusively on the principles of equal rights for all participants, full recognition of the independence and state sovereignty of each state, complete noninterference in its political independence, and the continuation in force of treaties concluded with third countries and future treaties as well. We are moving toward the treaty to expand economic and humanitarian cooperation under these conditions. Under these precise conditions, I want to say.

What does this mean? The Customs Union is on the point of being finalized, and with it a unified customs space in these countries. A payments union, which is next, is also being finalized, then a power union, a transport union, an interbank union, and thus a single economic space will be created. In order to implement all of this, we will set up an interstate council, consisting of the presidents and prime ministers. Furthermore, for the implementation of the decisions of this higher council, we will set up an integration committee. Then we will have to bring the legislation of the states closer together, and set up an interparliamentary committee to which each parliament will delegate a certain number of people.

There is no question about a Soviet Union or its restoration. Kazakhstan will not agree to that. Nor will Kazakhstan support any confederation, either. It is precisely economic, civilized, and cultural integration of the states that will bring people closer, which will calm the people, and create trust between states and trust between peoples. [end recording]

Kazakhstan: IMF Postpones Credits to Kazakhstan

LD2303172896 Almaty KARAVAN-BLITS in Russian 18 Mar 96 p 2

[FBIS Translated Text] Almaty: Last week the heads of the National Bank held their traditional monthly news conference. Uraz Dzhandosov, The chairman of the bank's board, and his two deputies, Orazaly Yerzhanov and Grigoriy Marchenko, took part.

This time the highlight of the news conference was not the inflation rate, though it was 2.5 percent in February, cause for some satisfaction in the National Bank, nor the National Bank's gold and foreign currency reserves, which dropped by $20 million over February, nor even the dollar exchange rate, which has started to drop inexplicably on the interbank currency exchange. The highlight was the statement by the chairman of the board of the National Bank that his organization had not managed to implement the International Monetary Fund's program for Kazakhstan. To be precise, the National Bank did not meet one of the program's criteria: The so-called clean internal assets. Giving no details, Mr. Dzhandosov just explained that this failure was caused by the fact that secondary banks had repaid credits to the National Bank at a slower rate than the bank had expected when it was concluding the agreement with the IMF. Nevertheless, the country's main bank is hoping to improve things by April and put things on the right track, according to the chairman.

Meanwhile, it appears that this fact played some role in making the talks with the IMF delegation in February less than satisfactory for the National Bank. At these talks, implementation of the IMF program due to be carried out by 1 January, was assessed, and, most important, the possibility of IMF funding for government three-year medium-term program was considered. A final agreement on granting Kazakhstan medium-term credit worth about $500-600 million was not reached during the IMF delegation's visit.

However, answering journalists' questions, Mr. Dzhandosov pointed out that not only was the National Bank "embarrassed" about these credits, our government had also failed to show itself to the IMF to its best advantage. In particular, the IMF representatives were not too impressed by the way taxes were being collected in Kazakhstan, by the way work was carried out with other sources of budget revenue, by the way reform of the system of social protection was being implemented.

or by economic policy in the power industry, communications, and communal services. In general, a whole list. Along with this, the head of the republic's Central Bank hurried to assure those present that the IMF representatives had had no questions relating to reform in the banking sphere.

In spite of this, as Uraz Dzhandosov said, IMF representatives are to visit the National Bank again after 20 April, and during the second round of talks an agreement with the fund will certainly be reached. Then, Kazakhstan will be the second CIS country to receive medium-term credits, albeit after Russia.

Apart from this, the past month turned out to be rich in innovations in the field of banking for the National Bank. As Orazaly Yerzhanov, deputy chairman of the National Bank, said, a package of documents aimed at implementing the law "On banks and banking activity" was adopted at a meeting of the bank's board in February. These documents include regulations on the procedure for opening a bank, for issuing licences for various kinds of banking activity and permission for setting up bank branches and representative offices and on the procedure for recalling these documents.

Regulations on prudential (economic) standards define five provisions for the normal functioning of a bank: A minimum authorized capital, sufficient capital, a maximum share of risk for one borrower, a liquidity coefficient, and a ceiling on the open currency position.

The country's main bankers have finally worked out regulations for the temporary closure of banks that envisage a number of compulsory administrative measures to rescue them.

According to Orazaly Yerzhanov, the National Bank is at present preparing a new draft law "On currency regulation" and, to support it, new rules for residents and nonresidents (foreign natural and legal persons) in Kazakhstan carrying out currency operations. The National Bank intends to bring the new law into line with the requirements of international financial organizations, in particular, to liberalize capital accounts, as the International Monetary Fund is requesting. Second, as Mr. Yerzhanov said, it intends to abolish a number of restrictions imposed by old law that do not make sense.

Kazakhstan: Russian, Kazakh Deputy Premiers Hold Talks

LD2303174796 Almaty KARAVAN-BLITS in Russian 21 Mar 96 pp 1-2

[FBIS Translated Text] On Tuesday evening [19 March], Kazakh President Nursultan Nazarbayev and Aleksey Bolshakov, deputy chairman of the Russian Government, discussed the results of the working visit of the Russian delegation to our republic.

At the meeting between Aleksey Bolshakov and Nigmetzhan Isingarin, Kazakh first deputy prime minister, which took place the same day, they discussed setting up energy and railway unions, Russian-Kazakh financial and industrial groups and associations, intensification of economic integration of the two states, cooperation in the military sphere, and currency and finance problems.

In particular, according to the protocol of the working meeting, the sides are, by 5 April, to solve questions relating to the special status of the Baykonur space launch site, securing law and order and human rights on its territory, and the pension guarantees of the inhabitants living in the town of Baykonur. The Ministry of Coal Industry of the Republic of Kazakhstan and YeES [Unified Energy System — Russian state energy supplier] of Russia must decide the issue of payment on a compensation basis of the charges for electricity being consumed by the Baykonur complex.

By the same date the reciprocal broadcasts of television programs on the territory of Kazakhstan and Russia must be settled, reciprocal agricultural machinery supplies must be provided for, and a single procedure of presenting tariff preferences for supply production for new technologies, goods, and construction items being purchased through domestic and foreign credits must be established. Work is also being carried out for the legal regulation of railway transport facilities located outside Russia and Kazakhstan.

By 29 March, the two sides must present the governments of Russia and Kazakhstan with draft agreements for signing to lease testing grounds, and by 10 April, to coordinate actions to provide conditions for life in the town of Priozersk.

The Armed Forces of Kazakhstan will receive arms and military equipment from Russia in exchange for APTs "Sistema" special equipment and an experimental model of an S-300 PM complex being transferred to the Russian party (Nigmetzhan Isingarin avoided giving an answer to journalists' questions about what complicated machinery is concealed behind these names).

The sides agreed that within a month the possibility of a sale on a tender basis of the state package of shares in Kazkhrom [Kazakh chrome company] to Russian enterprises will be considered.

The possibility of integrating the Kazakh energy system with YeES of Russia is foreseen, including the sale of shares within the program of Kazakh energy system privatization.

Abolition of VAT on output and services exported by Russian and Kazakh enterprises to each other will also be studied.

At the improvised news conference that took place on the same evening, Nigmetzhan Isingarin, speaking about the plans of Russian- Kazakh economic cooperation, noted that apart from setting up an electric energy union and a railway transport contract, two more industry contracts are being worked out actively at present: On science and new technologies; and on the prospecting, extraction, and transportation of gas and oil.

As for the decision on the possibility of the sale on tender basis of the state package of shares in Kazkhrom to Russian enterprises, the first deputy prime minister said: "There is production, which makes Russia and Kazakhstan competitors in the world market, for example, oil and gas. The same can be said about chrome as well: We extract ore that is processed later at three Russian and three Kazakh enterprises, and is supplied further as ferrous chrome later. There was a period when we gave ore neither to Russian nor to our enterprises, but exported it to the Far East. Today the ore is to be used by both Russia and Kazakhstan, but very tough and clear-cut conditions must be stipulated, by which we can be partners but not competitors."

To the question of payments to Uzbekistan of the debt for gas consumed by our republic, Nigmetzhan Kabatayuly [Isingarin] explained: "Today our debt runs at about $50 million; a month ago this figure was ranging about $80 million. It is being repaid partially through money and partially through output. Up until now mutual settlements have been very complicated because the Uzbek som has several exchange rates: Official, exchange, market, and noncash. Apart from that, our nonresident enterprises, which are supplying goods to Uzbekistan, cannot receive currency in return for them. When receiving soms, but again as nonresidents, they cannot exchange them for hard currency. Moreover, the Uzbek side has refused to receive soms for payments for gas. We have firmly enough put the necessity of settling these questions before the Uzbek leadership, and last week we agreed that payment for gas will be also made in Uzbek soms. Incidentally, for the entire first quarter of this year we have been using only our own gas from the Bazoyskoye gas storage-center, which is supplied to us via Uzbek territory.

"Today we are solving the problem on the clear-cut reciprocal convertibility of currencies, so that our southern regions can trade freely with Uzbekistan: The economic growth of our south, traditionally connected with Uzbekistan by trade relations, depends on this."

Speaking about the necessity of working out our own energy program, Nigmetzhan Isingarin said: "Today Kyrgyzstan, from which we are buying electricity, is raising the question of raising prices for it from 1.7 cents to three cents. This is very expensive."

Closing the news conference, Aleksey Bolshakov declared that he was satisfied with the negotiations, which are to be continued next in Moscow, where a Kazakh delegation is to fly soon.

Kazakhstan: Tashkent To Export Oil Via Iran

LD2203132596 Tashkent BISNES VESTNIK VOSTOKA 22-28 Mar 96 p 17

[FBIS Translated Text] Kazakhstan intends to sell part of its oil via Iran. A total of 2 to 5 million tonnes of oil can be exported annually through an alternative route to the Russian one — via the Caspian Sea and Persian Gulf. Oil Minister Nurlan Balghymbayev announced this at a meeting with his counterpart Gholam Reza Aqazadeh-Kho'i during his visit to Tehran. He has also proposed to supply fuel oil and other oil-refining products to the Iranians.

Aqazadeh-Kho'i agreed to both projects. He proposed the following export plan for Kazakh oil, by which Iran would receive it in one of its Caspian ports, and export precisely the same amount of its own oil for Kazakhstan via the Persian Gulf.

Talks on oil sector cooperation will continue.

Kazakhstan: German Company Agrees To Prospect for Oil

LD2403121796 Almaty KAZAKHSTANSKAYA PRAVDA in Russian 21 Mar 96 p 2

[FBIS Translated Text] The German Preussag Energie GmbH is the second foreign company after the French Elf Aquitaine to begin searching and prospecting for hydrocarbon raw material on the territory of Aktyubinsk Region. Under a memorandum signed in London in 1994 between a Kazakh government commission and Preussag Energie GmbH, the latter was allocated a territory of 7,000 sq km, later called Zharkamys, in which it could carry out geological prospecting work in Aktyubinsk Region. The company has set up a joint venture with authorized capital of $2 million.

The joint ventures [plural as received] are planning to spend about $111 million on geological prospecting work, which is expected to take five years. In the event of a sufficient quantity of oil and gas being discovered, the exploitation term for this area may be extended for another 25 years, with the compulsory payment to the Kazakh side of what are known as royalties, bonuses, other payments, and taxes, as is standard practice throughout the world.

Georgia

Georgia: Russian Ships Seal Off Abkhaz Port of Sukhumi

LD2203210196 Moscow INTERFAX in English 1908 GMT 22 Mar 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] MOSCOW, Mar 22 (Interfax) — Five Russian warships blocked the port of Sukhumi, the capital of Abkhazia, Friday afternoon, Abkhaz Deputy Prime Minister Nuri Gezerdava told Interfax.

According to him, Russian border guards are trying to compel a Turkish ship, which entered Sukhumi Bay earlier today, to get out to the open sea and set course for the Georgian port of Poti, where it is to undergo inspection.

He said Russian warships opened warning fire in the afternoon, to which the Abkhaz coastal artillery answered with several warning volleys.

He said officials from the North Caucasus military district command are expected to arrive in Sukhumi late Friday evening.

Georgia: Abkhaz Defense Minister Issues Order on Use of Seaports

LD2303095996 Sukhumi Republic of Abkhazia Radio in Georgian 0530 GMT 23 Mar 96

[FBIS Translated Text] Abkhazian Defense Minister Lieutenant General Sultan Sosnaliyev has issued an order following the Abkhazian Governments' resolution on the use of Abkhazia's territorial waters. The order says:

Any ship, regardless of its national attribution, may leave Abkhazian ports only with the permission of the commander of the Abkhazian Navy. Every ship attempting to leave or enter without such permission will be detained, inspected by the customs service, and will not be freed until the breach of norms of sailing within the territorial waters of the state which is in a state of war is accounted for.

In order to implement the order, special naval boats will be assigned and the required number of observation points will be established at seaports.

Georgia: Abkhaz Armed Forces on 'Red Alert' After Incident

LD2303102296 Moscow Mayak Radio Network in Russian 1000 GMT 23 Mar 96

[FBIS Translated Excerpt] An incident involving the use of arms took place last night between Russian and Abkhaz border troops in the waters off the port of Sukhumi. [passage omitted]

The armed forces of Abkhazia have been put on red alert. Artillery and tanks have been redeployed on Sukhumi's embankment.

Georgia: Shevardnadze Approves Russian Action Against Turkish Ship

LD2303115696 Moscow ITAR-TASS in English 1145 GMT 23 Mar 96

[By Tenghiz Pachkoria]

[FBIS Transcribed Text] TBILISI, March 23 (Itar-Tass) — Measures taken by Russian border guards and Georgian authorities for customs and border inspection of ships and civilians in the Poti port are in full conformance with the Russian-Georgian Agreement on procedures of guarding the border, said the press service of the president of Georgia today. It was reacting to the Abkhaz government's assertion that actions taken by Russian border guards and Georgian authorities constituted "violation of norms of the International law and an interference in internal affairs of Abkhazia".

In compliance with Russian-Georgian agreements, including maritime ones, coinciding with CIS external borders, are protected by Russian border guards.

President of Georgia Eduard Shevardnadze, after his return from an official visit to Moscow, said in Tbilisi on March 20 that the leadership of Russia has asked appropriate authorities to intensify border control on the Russian-Georgian frontier. "Now no ship will be allowed to enter the Sukhumi port without consent of the Georgian government", Georgia's head of state said.

Russia and Georgia have agreed that henceforth all foreign vessels proceeding to the Sukhumi port must be subjected to customs and border control in the Poti port. According to Itar-Tass reports, the matter, above all, concerns Turkish ships, which over the preceding two years have plied between Trabzon and Sukhumi unhindered.

The president of Georgia's statement issued today emphasized, if Georgian border and customs departments will create "proper conditions for work and guarantee of security", then they will carry out inspections exclusively in Sukhumi". "Any shipment of foodstuffs and essential goods to Abkhazia are possible, but they must be carried out with the knowledge and permission of the government of Georgia and with a compulsory observance of appropriate border and customs procedures", the presidential press service statement said.

Georgia: Abkhaz Leader, Russian Commander Hold Talks on Tensions

LD2303154196 Moscow ITAR-TASS in English 1450 GMT 23 Mar 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] MOSCOW, March 23 (Itar-Tass) — Abkhazian President Vladislav Ardzinba and commander of the Caucasian military district Colonel-General Vladimir Ruzlyayev are trying to remove tension in relations between the Abkhazian leadership and Russian border guards at their talks under way in Sukhumi.

Informed sources in Sukhumi told Itar-Tass by telephone that Abkhazian parliament speaker Sokrat Dzhindzholia and Foreign Minister Leonid Lakerbaya are also taking part in closed-door talks.

No details of the talks are reported. However, according to informed sources, the parties agreed to refrain from taking any unpleasant measures over the 48 hours.

Itar-Tass learned that Ardzinba had had a telephone conversation with head of the Russian Federal Border Guard Service Andrey Nikolayev and the Russian Foreign Ministry officials.

The Abkhazian parliament held an extraordinary session in Sukhumi on Friday. Their participants, who stuck to a tough stand on incidents in the Sukhumi port waters, spoke in favour of maintaining a balanced approach to settle the incident.

Georgia: Turkish Ship Seized by Russians No Longer Detained

LD2303202696 Moscow INTERFAX in English 1803 GMT 23 Mar 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] TBILISI, March 23 (Interfax) - Georgian President Eduard Shevardnadze's press secretary said on Saturday a Turkish ship stopped on Friday by Russian coast guards off the coast of Georgia's breakaway region of Abkhazia "will freely proceed to [the Abkhazian capital] Sukhumi unless some offenses are discovered on its board, for example gunmen, weapons or drugs are found there."

"From now on all cargo vessels heading for Abkhazia must be checked at the Georgian port of Poti, which is stipulated by the examination mechanism agreed with the Russian authorities during last week's visit to Moscow of Georgia's head of state, Eduard Shevardnadze," press secretary Vakhtang Abashidze told Interfax.

He said such ships could be examined in Sukhumi as well if Abkhazia's authorities guaranteed safety for the inspectors.

The Russian coast guards' conduct "has fully conformed to the Russian-Georgian agreements signed at a Commonwealth of Independent States summit in Moscow on January 19." Under those documents no cargo can be delivered to Abkhazia without the consent of the Georgian government and without being checked by Georgian and Russian authorities, Abashidze said.

"The ballyhoo which the Abkhazian separatist authorities have raised over the blocking of the Turkish vessel is yet another trick designed to implant in public opinion the idea of a continuing blockade of Abkhazia, the aim of which is to starve its population," Abashidze said.

Commenting on current talks to settle the Georgian-Abkhazian conflict, he said: "The separatists are torpedoing them for one reason - they are impatiently waiting for the presidential election in Russia."

Georgia: Abkhaz Army Blockades Russian Border Guard Staff

LD2403172596 Moscow INTERFAX in English 1359 GMT 24 Mar 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] SOCHI, March 24 (Interfax) — Units of the Abkhaz Armed Forces have blockaded the staff of the Russian border guard sea brigade in the Abkhaz town of Ochamchira, a well-informed source in the Russian town of Sochi told Interfax on March 23.

Three tanks and three howitzers were brought near the military town of Russian border guards, the same source said.

The Abkhaz authorities did not allow a convoy of Russian vehicles from Sochi carrying food and medicines for Russia's Sukhumi border regiment to go to the area where the border regiment is deployed, the same source said.

The Russian Federal Border Guard Service declined to comment on this report. Consultations with the Abkhaz authorities are now under way to stabilize the situation, the Federal Border Guard Service said.

On March 22, Abkhaz coastal defense units and military ships were put on alert "because of the actions by Russian border guard motor boats near the Abkhaz coasts."

According to updated reports, the Turkish trade ship which was blockaded by Russian border guards at Abkhazia's Sukhumi bay since March 22 finally arrived in the Sukhumi port for unloading.

Sources in Sochi confirmed that Director of the Russian Federal Border Guard Service Andrei Nikolayev is expected to come to Sochi on Sunday for talks with Abkhaz leader Vladislav Ardzinba.

Abkhazia is a breakaway internal Georgian republic.

Georgia: Abkhaz Forces Return to Bases After Russian Ships Leave

LD2403180696 Moscow INTERFAX in English 1723 GMT 24 Mar 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] SUKHUMI, March 24 (Interfax) — Units of the Abkhazian armed forces were redeployed to their bases after five Russian border patrol ships on Saturday [23 March] left the Sukhumi bay, Abkhazian Defense Minister Sultan Sosnaliyev told Interfax on Sunday.

According to him, tensions in the republic which erupted due to the confrontation between the Russian border guards and the Abkhazian authorities, "are subsiding."

"Russian border guards became hostages in the political gambling to suit the purposes of Georgia,"said Sosnaliyev. "The provocative operation of border guards in Abkhazia has frustrated," he said.

At the same time, he said, "if the blockade of Abkhazia continues, the Russian servicemen deployed in the republic will fully feel its consequences on themselves."

He also told Interfax that the director of the Federal Border Guard Service of Russia Andrey Nikolayev and the Abkhazian leader Vladislav Ardzinba had met in Sochi on Sunday. However, nothing is known about the results of the talks.

In an interview with Interfax the commander of the Russian border guard contingent in Sukhumi Pavel Andreyev said that tensions in the republic are subsiding and border guards continue their routine service.

He expressed hope that the situation between Russian border guards and the Abkhazian authorities "is normalizing."

Meanwhile, a source in the Sukhumi contingent has told Interfax, the families of the servicemen are still in the barracks under the protection of Russian border guards.

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